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New movies, the

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VIII, No. 1

January, 1933

Invitation
to the Symposium

The Use of Motion
Pictures in Character
Education

Good, Better, Best
à la 1932

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Invitation to the Symposium

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COMING from the theatre and from the projection room one says, "That was a good film" or "That was not a good film." What does he mean? Is the answer the result of a vague feeling or is it so defined as to the whys that it can be expressed. With photoplay appreciation a study in schools and club groups, all are becoming more critical and are asking, "What makes for greater merit or enjoyment in one film than in another? What are the essentials of a good film?" After having answered such a question for oneself comes the further question, "What do others consider a good film?" The answers are certain to provide interesting material in comparative judgments.

With such a thought in mind we carried the interrogation to the members of our Committee on Exceptional Photoplays and here we give such answers as have come to us to date. Others have been promised and will be published later. So far they say:

"A good picture is one in which subject, interpretation in terms of acting and *mise-en-scene*, and camera work all receive expert attention at the hands of a skillful director. When the director has been able to capture the mood of his theme and to reflect it accurately in the human and technical material at his disposition the picture becomes great."—J. K. Paulding, Chairman of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays.

"My idea of a good film depends upon the consistency of its component parts, pace, di-

rection, acting, and not least of all, the idea behind the story. It is easier to talk of good American films in negatives, than in any other way. That is, a good film is one that does not submit to all the Hollywood clichés; which does not try to exhaust the good actor by forcing him to play the same thing he once made a hit in; which does not rely on any of the countless illicit tricks which render most of our movies mediocre."—Lincoln Kirstein.

"Since one talent of the camera is motion, I would say that the good film uses mobility to express itself. The line is horizontal—line of speed, whereas elsewhere in the arts it is vertical—the plumb-line. Enter, therefore, infinite opportunities for humor. And, since, the other natural talent of the camera is representation, another type of good film is the one in which the cinematic image is profoundly sufficient."—Hazel Hawthorne.

"A good film is one which through good direction, good photography, good settings and good acting puts across the plot, feeling, and action of a good scenario, and also gives the audience the prime requisite of a good film: visual excitement."—Ralph Steiner.

We hope to keep this subject in the question box for some time as many minds should offer many opinions. At the Annual Luncheon of the National Board last year the composer and music critic, Deems Taylor, was one of the speakers. He said, "I have been asked to define a 'better film'.

(Continued on page 5)

The Use of Motion Pictures in Character Education

PROF. HOWARD M. LESOURD

Boston University School of Religious Education and Social Science

Schools of today are, we know, not devoted merely to the study of text book material for itself alone but to the study of materials which have to do as well with outside interests of the students. Book learning is not the goal but rather character building through learning. The use of motion pictures in this relationship is a suggestion of interest; especially to those giving attention to the new work of junior review groups, and in this connection we print below excerpts from an address delivered by Prof. Lesourd at a meeting of the Massachusetts Branch of the National Academy of Visual Education in Quincy, Mass.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE two subjects of greatest popular interest in the educational field today are motion pictures and character education. The combination of these two ought to be especially intriguing. That the motion picture is a practicable and useful tool in education is now generally recognized. Its use in character education follows as a natural and direct corollary.

Motion pictures will become invaluable to the program of character education, because of their effectiveness in dealing with the emotions which are the essence of the dynamic factors of life. The general popularity of motion pictures arises almost entirely out of their emotional appeal. This constitutes at once their possible danger and their unlimited potentialities. Teachers vary greatly in their abilities to arouse proper feelings but when a film is made its effectiveness is uniform and universal.

The character education programs now found in the public schools include both the direct and indirect methods. The use of motion pictures in indirect character education may be effected through the regular classes of the school when films form a part of the teaching materials. As motion pictures come to supplement the reading texts there is every reason to anticipate a greater effectiveness in securing those concomitants which are included in the concept of desirable character. It takes little imagination to see how in social studies, nature classes and courses in general science the motion pic-

tures can be so planned as to teach good will toward other peoples, kindness to birds and observance of the laws of health. Through pictures, whole realms of appreciation open up that formerly could be considered only in abstractions. Tests have been made to determine the effect of pictures in which peoples of other races and nations are portrayed. Appreciations and prejudices vary directly with favorable or unfavorable presentations. It is perfectly possible to create brotherliness in the minds of school pupils through social study films that bring acquaintance with other peoples and make them likable. In a similar way definite improvements in personal and community health practices have been secured by creating dissatisfactions with present conditions and a desire for something better.

Here is another example of the working of the indirect method. Films produced by the regular motion picture companies are sometimes used in public school auditoriums with the primary purpose of entertainment. With proper guidance, which usually prevails in such a plan, pictures could be selected which present situations and conflicts calling for ethical discriminations. It would be very easy in class rooms and on the outside to discuss the ethical principles involved in such films and apply those principles to the practical every-day lives of the boys and girls. This could be facilitated by the careful preparation of a discussion outline.

Such a use of motion pictures might even be made in connection with features shown at the local theatres which many of the children would have seen. As a means of making the pictures real to those in the class room who did not see them in the theatre, stereoptican slides could be secured presenting the key situations in a way that would arouse the interest and hold the attention of the group. A minister in Newark, New Jersey, for years packed his church every Sun-

day night by showing stills from current motion pictures while he discussed the ethical problems suggested. This plan might be used successfully in the school situation in much the same way that literature is now adapted to character education. It is assumed, of course, that only the best types of theatrical films would be used for such purposes.

The direct method of character education through motion pictures is possible by using special films developed to meet the particular problems faced by boys and girls. These could be secured from two sources: first, by producing new pictures which would be arranged in the form of short courses. These might deal with the choice of a vocation, problems of race relationship, social justice, international goodwill, and those traits and qualities of life which have enabled outstanding characters of the present and past to attain their usefulness in the world. The cost of such productions would necessitate at the start heavy subsidies, but wide use through the schools and churches of the country would in course of time make such pictures self-supporting.

A second source of materials for direct moral instruction would be the newsreels and entertainment pictures which have outlived their theatrical usefulness and from which cuts of life situations might be taken. These would provide one reel subjects which could be organized into suitable units. The quality of these pictures would be the highest. There would be keen interest in the film and therefore in the practical problem it presented. Outlines for discussions and talks should accompany each picture. The cost of this service would be at a minimum, involving only editing, print costs and distribution, for the producing companies would probably be willing to make available to the schools of the country materials of such great social value.

CHARGING that "horse and buggy methods" are being used in schools in preference to taking advantage of visual ed-

ucation for children through talking pictures, Benjamin Harrison Darrow, head of the radio division of the Ohio State Department of Education is urging the educational profession to join forces and find funds to install film equipment. He believes by failing to have talking pictures on historical, geographical and scientific subjects the people are mispending hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

THE annual awards of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences attract increasing attention each year. Our readers may be interested in a summary of how the National Board of Review rated pictures figuring in these awards. *The Sin of Madelon Claudet* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* were both starred selected pictures, starred because of the acting in the principal roles: Helen Hayes in the former and Fredric March in the latter were awarded medals as best actress and best actor of the year. Frank Borzage was voted best director for *Bad Girl*, which our magazine gave Honorable Mention. *Grand Hotel*, voted the best picture, was given Honorable Mention. *The Champ* was a starred selected picture—voted a medal by the Academy for the best original screen story. The best adaptation prize went to Edwin Burke for adapting *Bad Girl*. Special critical comment was given in our pages to *Transatlantic* and *Shanghai Express*, both of which the Academy honored, the first by a medal for its art director, the second for its photography.

(Continued from page 3)

That is an order. Anyone's definition is as good as any other's. My idea of a good film is one that is filled with human beings." If one definition is as good as another, we must get many to arrive at one so may we receive your idea, in one sentence, one paragraph, or as you will of "what is a good film?"

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Good, Better, Best à la 1932

THIS year, for the first time in its history, the National Board of Review, through its Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, has undertaken to choose the one best out of all the American feature pictures produced during the year. There was practically no difficulty or argument about the one "best." No other American film of the year came anywhere near *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* in its combination of important material and effective treatment: in a year, too, which saw American producers tackling important material with unprecedented courage. The great and decisive difference between *I Am a Fugitive* and at least a dozen praiseworthy approaches to it was a knowledge of how the job should be done and an ability to do it which resulted

in complete consistency and artistic sincerity. It showed no faltering, no timid falling back on hokum, no resort to the trickery that is usually depended on to stir an audience with a momentary spurious emotion. Most of the failures in this respect come not from lack of good intentions but from that deceptive chasm between mere cleverness, which so often gets away with a hit at the box-office, and mastery. Mervyn LeRoy, with inestimable help from an excellent scenario, excellent actors and an excellent technical staff, made the leap over that chasm with apparently enough breath left for another step forward.

The only other American film that during the year was put among the National Board's "Exceptional Photoplays" was that bleak but engrossing tragedy, *Payment Deferred*, which its producers seem to have been rather ashamed of: at any rate they made no perceptible effort to bring it to the public's at-

Year's Best Films Chosen by National Board Committee on Exceptional Photoplays

American

As You Desire Me
A Bill of Divorcement
A Farewell to Arms
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang
Madame Racketeer
Payment Deferred
Scarface
Tarzan
Trouble in Paradise
Two Seconds

Foreign

A Nous la Liberté
Der Andere
The Battle of Gallipoli
Golden Mountains
Kameradschaft
Mädchen in Uniform
Der Raub der Mona Lisa
Reserved for Ladies
Road to Life
Zwei Menschen

tention. Perhaps there is little to recommend to a needy box-office in the unsensational story of a timid and rather petulant little fat man who murders someone to get out of debt and then lives undetected and unhappy in a sort of sordid opulence till at length he is ironically punished for a crime he would have died rather than commit. But those who missed seeing it missed an unusually effective film drama, and a remarkable impersonation by Charles Laughton.

The other eight out of our ten had better be treated alphabetically because it would be impossible for the committee to reach any unanimity about their order of merit. *As You Desire Me* comes in chiefly by grace of Greta Garbo. The Pirandello play, treated with plenty of respect, did not turn out to be one of the screen's great achievements, but it made a setting for one of the loveliest evocations of the spirit that any screen actress has ever made. The haunting overtones of Garbo's acting, its indescribably unearthly beauty, it will take a long time to forget.

A Bill of Divorcement is much more a screened play than a real motion picture, but it is interesting and moving, with more depth and grace than common, and it gave John Barrymore a chance to do some acting of the quality that many of his admirers have long been waiting for. Moreover it provided a brilliant debut for Katherine Hepburn, who may well turn out to be one of the important people of the films in the coming days.

A Farewell to Arms is an odd mixture of Ernest Hemingway and Frank Borzage, of vigor and sentimentality. Some last minute attempts to conceal the fact that the Italian army once retreated from the Austrians also add to the confusion. But the total effect is a frank and moving love story, lifted at moments to remarkable beauty by the sensitive artistry of Helen Hayes. It will not matter except to uncompromising Hemingway devotees that most of the characters are little like the characters that Hemingway created in his novel.

Madame Racketeer is mostly to be remembered as a frame for the display of Alison

Skipworth and one of those hearty impersonations of hers which hint so vividly at a large and humorous appreciation of life behind everything she does. She had her moments in *Night After Night* and *If I Had a Million—Madame Racketeer*, though it is a rather tricky farce-comedy of no great pretensions, gives her more like eighty moments, which is a pleasure to be grateful for.

Scarface, the last big splash of the gangster wave, was one of the most brutal and effective of its kind. In spite of some awkward and futile concessions to the censors it gave a vivid and truthful picture, however distressing, of an important section of American life, that fell short mainly—as truth—in giving its hero the conventional movie punishment of death instead of recording the bitter fact that the law is actually afraid to punish such men. Incidentally the film started at least three players toward the big lights of stardom.

Tarzan qualifies by being the perfect piece of hokum and tremendous fun. It pretended to be nothing but juvenile fiction, with no relation to fact or credibility or inner truth—a fairy tale of adventure to be enjoyed without any submission of the intelligence to sloppy deception. A much healthier film than the countless romances that so distort life with sentimental falseness.

Ernst Lubitsch is a director of such individuality and skill that his work is bound to stand out in a year's product. *Trouble in Paradise* represents him at his most characteristic—being a superficial story, bordering closely on farce, the director's superficialities do it no harm but rather increase its pleasantness. Of course nothing in it approaches the superbly ironic beginning of *Broken Lullaby*—the rest of that promising film, which originally bore the title *The Man I Killed*, furnished a battleground of contention between those who found it beautiful and touching and important and those who found it trivial, wearily sentimental and complicatedly false.

Two Seconds, in the rather trite frame-

work of reviewing a man's life at the instant of his death, displayed a remarkable attempt to show the disintegration and defeat of an idealist's mind by the inadjustable assaults of circumstance. A big enough subject to stand up conspicuously in spite of some weaknesses in execution. It also gave Mr. Robinson room for one of his most clear-cut and least clichéd performances.

This list of ten American films is so far from being sacred and exclusive that it might well have included several others. *Million Dollar Legs*—so misleadingly titled—came near displacing *Madame Racketeer*: probably the heights of gorgeous irresponsibility reached by King W. C. Fields and his court in the beginning were too lofty to be sustained and one felt a bit of strain in trying to float in the realm of fantasy for so many reels. *The Crowd Roars*, with James Cagney's inimitable brand of Americanism and its potent commentary on the mass passion for sitting comfortably in an audience and demanding thrills from unshared danger, certainly belongs in some list. *The Night of June 13th* sticks in the memory for its unmatched suburban atmosphere and for unusual devices in direction. *The Doomed Battalion*—so much the product of foreign talent that it cannot strictly be called an American film—ranks high among pictures of the war. *Horsefeathers*, though not the most satisfactory exhibition of the Marx Brothers' antics, cannot be forgotten in any record of present-day urban humor, and Jimmy Durante in *The Phantom President* demands a bit of tribute. Tribute too is given *Union Depot*, which used the *Grand Hotel* formula far more successfully and excitingly than its model did.

Incidentally it is interesting to note that *Grand Hotel* received not a single vote. The reason being that it was successful only as a feat of showmanship, so slow and miscast and generally inept, compared with the play from which it was copied, that without its bargain-counter display of stars it would have hardly caused even a box-office ripple.

There are several films that deserve a

passing tear as noble experiments—attempts to picture important elements in our life whose sincerity was not equaled by adequate execution. *American Madness* tried to do something with bank failures, but not knowing quite what to do it fell back on trite movie villainies and sentimentalities to fill out its story. *Cabin in the Cotton* went boldly into the question of white slavery on cotton plantations, but it suffered from having no decisive point of view, from much ignorance of what the South really is, and from Richard Barthelmess, and succeeded only in revealing the fact that Bette Davis probably has a notable future if she is given the right chance. *The Conquerors*, treading hopefully along the trail of *Cimarron*, lost itself in a bog of optimism about panics and depressions without the remotest conception of what panics are really about. *The Last Mile*, by the time it had reached the screen, had been so often imitated in advance that its punch was gone—and the conventional movieization it was subjected to failed to make up for the lost novelty. *20,000 Years in Sing Sing* held out a promise of being something unusual in prison pictures but turned out to be a movie of gangster reformation that was probably more satisfying to Warden Lawes than to anybody else. *Hell's Highway*, another of the chain-gang cycle, started out as a vigorous indictment of the malign influence of private contractors in prison camps, and then went movie. *Rackety Rax*, intended as a burlesque of racketeering, was so little more extravagant than many racketeering films of no humorous intent that it missed fire. *Washington Masquerade* and *Washington Merry Go Round* made pretensions of investigating political life in the national capitol, but they smacked more of the movie writer hastily turning out a melodrama than of any close acquaintance with how things happen in Washington.

When it comes to the foreign films, and the comparative ease of selecting ten that really seem "best," it must be remembered that only the best are sent over here, that

those that come here in a given year do not necessarily belong in a single year's product, and that they are made for a different public than that for which our own producers make their pictures. In other words, it is easier to satisfy a higher artistic standard in selecting the best of the imported films.

Probably important in any year would be René Clair's *A Nous la Liberté* and Pabst's *Kameradschaft*, because Clair in France and Pabst in Germany are two of the most interesting European minds expressing themselves in the cinema. Whether their films of the past year represent them at their best is perhaps a matter of opinion—at any rate they provoke opinion and discussion, and in comparison with the work of other men they are certainly of prime interest and importance. *The Battle of Gallipoli* is not a product of 1932, but as it had to wait till then for general American distribution, and is one of the best war films ever made, it is put in this year's list. *Road to Life* looms up as the first, and still the best, expression of the Russian cinematic genius in the sound film. *Mädchen in Uniform*—adequate though not remarkable, technically—goes deeper and more sympathetically into the psychology of adolescence than any film that comes to mind, which makes it memorable. The other five of the list are just excellent pictures of their kind without being in any way landmarks.—J. S. H.

Short Film of Importance

A recent film of the Magic Carpet series, directed by Bonney Powell and distributed by Fox Film Corp., entitled *Gorges of the Giants*, raises the question, How far do plot, actors, studio technique, etc., contribute to the cinema—are they necessarily integral parts of that art? If so, to what extent? And conversely, is the pictorial material, when properly used by the camera—or rather the pictorial subject chosen for the camera as essential and therefore fit for creative usage—the element to be searched for and found

before the designing of the cinematic pattern can be undertaken? In the manipulation of the camera (through camera sense) before a spectacle of human movement with its roots in age-old labor-practice, and with the imaginative focus on the social meaning of that practice, this little film, shot far up the mysterious reaches of the Yangtze-Kiang, achieves an allegorical grandeur and a cinematic magnificence that go far toward suggesting that the cinema can dispense with most adjuncts of the studio. Let those who like to talk about such things as "mood," "pace," "tempo," "rhythm," "dynamics," "structure," and "form" contemplate this brief and eloquent work, in which the pretentiousness of all artifice is spurned in the effort to approach a simple rendering of man's image through visualizing what certain men really have to do in their travail of life. For this effort results in an approach—and inevitably, artistically speaking—to the true, the significant and the beautiful as such terms may be translated in a motion picture; it also results in an approximate definition of motion picture art, a definition which most of us find hard to put into words. Not only this film, but a number of the Magic Carpet series, should make it more easy to do so. The whole series, for that matter, has shown distinction, and given promise that somewhere in their cinematic travels, a fire-stone would be struck and light would flash out.

The Yangtze-Kiang film, however, is more than a spark. In this cinematic treatment of the Chinese river people who labor their junks to land out of the current, toiling two hundred-fold up the slopes of the river bank with the tow-harness about their necks, foot-grasp-by-foot-grasp, step by painful step, tugging in rhythm, and as if by some unavoidable law of compulsion, in patience and sweat and under the will of the gods and of the ages—what have you, pictorially and in meaning?—the force of the motion picture intelligently and passionately exercised in order to reveal the weary, untiring effort of the tribe to do its work.



(Courtesy of Motion Picture Herald)

Through a Window Lattice in "Gorges of the Giants"

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

THE Director of Research of the Institute of Child Welfare of the University of California has been quoted as saying "and we, too, have found in our study of leisure time preferences of children, as prepared by various groups, a front rank position for the motion picture." But it would seem from a survey covering Brooklyn, N. Y., the results of which have recently been published by the Welfare Council of New York City that when the motion picture is the most available leisure hour pastime then it is not quite so popular. For city children the movie is easier to find than the outdoor play space so desire for the latter takes the lead.

As part of its study of Brooklyn's needs and resources in character building activities for boys, the Research Bureau of the Welfare Council had occasion to ask 1,500 boys in three Brooklyn schools just what they did when they were "having a good time," what else they did after school and evenings, and what they would prefer to do during their spare time if they had complete choice in the matter. About 100 boys were uncertain or uncommunicative about their recreational habits and desires; of the remaining 1,400, the Council says "an overwhelming majority voiced desires that judged by strict social standards were entirely sane, wholesome and reasonable. Few gave answers that would cause even the most conservative parents any alarm."

The study, according to Dr. Neva R. Deardorff, director of the Research Bureau of the Welfare Council, upsets a number of common notions about boys. It showed, for instance, that reading is a more popular pastime—at least among this group of Brooklyn boys—than either baseball or swimming, even in June, the month during which the questions were answered.

Answering the question as to what they preferred to do during their spare time if

they had free choice, 280 boys chose reading, 258 swimming, 159 baseball, 104 others said merely "play ball" without specifying what kind of ball game, and only 75 out of the 1,400 listed going to the movies as first choice among the things they preferred to do in spare time. Amusement parks proved to be somewhat less popular with these boys than the "movies," the number of votes cast for the former being 67, while 21 boys said they would like to go to the theatre.

All told, some 2,800 preferences were indicated by the 1,400 boys, most boys citing two or more things they like to do. Athletics were most in demand being the choice of 872 boys. Swimming and baseball headed this list; rowing, handball, tennis, basketball, football, and boxing followed. Only thirteen boys out of 1,400 wanted to play golf and three wished they could play polo.

Other outdoor activities were next with a total of 514 votes. Hiking led this list as the choice of 77 boys; 66 wanted to go fishing, 58 automobile riding, 52 bicycle riding, 45 horseback riding; 41 wished they could go camping; 33 chose boating, 32 flying, 30 "going to the country" and 16 hunting. Eleven boys were satisfied with "walking," 6 with going to the beach; 5 wanted gardening, 4 "flying pigeons." Two boys listed "chopping wood" as the thing they would most like to do and one boy out of the 1,400 wanted to fly a kite.

Educational activities, in great variety, were listed as first choice by 429 boys with reading heading the list. The urge to explore the wonders of this planet was expressed by 65 boys who wrote "travel" after the question, "What would you do with your spare time if you had your choice?" Three boys wanted to "look for adventure" and 66 were content to sit quietly at home and study—at least so they said in the questionnaire submitted at school.

Of the preferences expressed by the boys 418 were classified as "social activities." Heading this list were 59 boys who declared what they preferred most during their spare hours was "going out with girls." Thirty-three gregarious souls thought they would prefer to visit friends and relatives. Only 14 boys mentioned "parties and dances." The pugnacious element in Brooklyn's population was represented by four boys who expressed a desire to "fight." A solitary boy wanted to "shoot craps."

When all the boys' first choices were grouped by their outstanding characteristics into six main types, it was found that 27 per cent of the expressed preferences were for athletics; 19 per cent were for other outdoor activities; 18 per cent for educational pursuits; 15 per cent for social diversions; 14 per cent for constructive activities; and 7 per cent for amusements.

The complete report, a volume of some 300 pages, holds much of interest for those especially interested in the subject of the social-recreational life of boys. The survey was made possible by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation. More information may be secured by writing to Dr. Neva R. Dear-dorff, Director, Research Bureau, Welfare Council of New York City, 122 East 22nd Street, New York City.

MRS. N. IRVING HYATT, Chairman, of the Spartanburg (S. C.) Better Films Council sent us recently a long and interesting letter about the work of the Council. In this she enclosed a report of their activity for the year which we reprint below. Much activity is condensed into a few paragraphs but all those connected with such work will realize the time and effort spent. She writes:

"Another year has come to a close for our Spartanburg Better Films Council and a busy one it has proved. It has always given me great pleasure and satisfaction to serve in this work and I am deeply grateful for

the privilege. There has never been a time so far when we have not received much loyal support and cooperation from the townspeople—the theatre managers, the newspapers, the hotels, the churches, our radio station, the patriotic and civic organizations and all our clubs.

"This past year we have been requested to give suggestions to other groups in nearby towns for the organization of Better Films Clubs. We have broadcast many of the weekly programs of pictures to be shown at our theatres and have had many preview reports in our Sunday paper of the coming attractions at the theatres.

"Six children Saturday morning matinees have been held at the theatres for the benefit of the Salvation Army, Red Cross, Orphanage House and Child Health Camp. Everyone was admitted free who brought an offering of food. In this way we were able to give \$300 worth of food to the needy. Most of these matinees were held in celebration of some event and so given added meaning. We had the old ladies from the Home as our guests at one time and the children from the Orphans Home another time as it was convenient to the theatre manager.

"We have reviewed all the pictures at our theatres and had a report of the reviews in our newspapers. We held an interesting voting contest in which ballots were placed in boxes in all the theatres for two days asking people to name the type of pictures they liked best. Society drama won first place. (In her letter Mrs. Hyatt enclosed a record of the vote and it may interest you to know some of the other results. Comedy came second, mystery and melodrama third and fourth and war stories received fifth place. If comedy got second place it did not mean slapstick, but a more refined comedy, as that fell in the twelfth and last order of preference.) It has been found helpful to have an article or two read at our meetings taken from newspapers or magazines that have a bearing on our work. We also have a round table talk on interesting news from the National Board of Review Magazine."

New York City, it has been said, has lagged behind other cities in providing with any regularity special motion picture programs for its children. To show our readers from afar that such movements are a part of localized motion picture interest, we print the enthusiastic response which we received from Mrs. Frances A. Lesser, Chairman, Motion Picture Committee, Parents Association, Public School No. 26, New York City, in charge of the Neighborhood Movie Clubs, when we asked her to send us word of her special activities embracing this interest.

WHAT can parents do when they discover that their children are seeing and being influenced (in a deleterious way) by some of the product which masquerades as entertainment in the average neighborhood movie "palace"? Nothing! Or, at least that is the conclusion that most parents are forced to in their attempt to solve the problem thus presented.

But certain parent groups in The Bronx in New York City resolved that there was a better solution than mere passivity or the attempt, single-handed, to act as censor for each and every performance and keep their children away from those found to be undesirable. The Parents' Association of P. S. 26, The Bronx, for example, formed an active committee and after due consideration submitted their proposition to local theatre operators. They found one sympathetic to their point of view and proceeded to organize an activity which is beginning to have repercussions over a much wider area even than the optimistic ladies had anticipated.

The project consists, briefly, in special performances for children on Saturday mornings when the theatre is "idle" and at a time when its regular audience is not interfered with. For these performances, programs are built with emphasis both on omission and commission. Omitted are the sexy, sensational, "tabloid-ic" elements whose damage consists in their awakening the child's mind to the most undesirable aspects of contemporary life. On the positive side, the programs are built up of regular commercially available short and feature subjects which contain all the thrills and excitement that the child wants in entertainment, and even,

where possible, things healthfully stimulating to the child's imagination. This latter requires a bit of doing. I do not wish to imply that we are always fortunate in achieving our aims—mistakes do creep into any human enterprise. But we hope to achieve a large percentage of our aims.

Through the cooperation of the local schools, the committee is able to bring to the attention of the children advance notices of the week's forthcoming program.

At the performance itself, the active cooperation of the children is gained. Supervision by the regular theatre personnel is hardly apparent. The children police themselves, but are allowed a large measure of freedom of expression. As a result, the average adult would find these performances much too loudly enthusiastic compared to the decorum required at regular performances.

So far as the parents are concerned, they are very enthusiastic. It relieves them of a responsibility which in most cases they feel themselves inadequate to undertake, and they are pleased to think that their children are being supervised in entertainment that will not impair their moral and cultural sensibilities.

The theatre management is content with a very small profit. Owing to the necessity frequently of showing special prints, the theatre barely broke even the first year. But the theatre interest is well served by the good will it gains in the neighborhood. Thus in the second season of this movement, at the Park Plaza Theatre, where it was initiated, the theatre makes only a nominal profit on the children's shows but has succeeded in climbing out of the red in its regular adult activities. This is attributed in a large measure to its improved status as a result of its fine work in behalf of the children.

Some of the local school staff in the neighborhood have been won from initial indifference to enthusiastic cooperation as they have had proof of the sincerity and value of the work. Indeed, the movement is now

spreading to embrace other neighborhoods and theatres and I am glad to have an opportunity to put into larger practice some of the ideas developed in the initial project.

Not all is smooth going, of course. If I were asked to list the most important stumbling block, I would say it is the scarcity of *commercially* available suitable material. I stress commercially because the modest income obtainable for the theatre (admission price for children is held down to 10c—rarely more except for special performances such as marionette shows) precludes the use of very expensive features. The program must be built up of material available easily, through regular distribution channels, and at modest cost. Where special prints are used of outstanding feature material cost enters as an important factor.

Another difficulty is to find theatre managers with sufficient imagination and energy to cooperate effectively in our work. The manager of the average movie theatre has a large and wide variety of work and is considerably pressed for time. We have been fortunate thus far in the type of men we have had contact with in this respect.

However, all difficulties and expenditures of time are amply compensated for when on Saturday mornings the eager children, barely suppressing their excitement, come streaming in to find their favorite seats and with eyes aglow await their anticipated pleasure.

What a howl (at which the adults present discreetly shield their ears) when the lights dim and the performance starts! Nor is the adult of sensitive nerves likely to remain undisturbed during the performance for the children are not perfunctory in their expressions of appreciation. And when the group singing starts, vocal harmony may not be present but the harmony of child fellowship surely is. Neither is the matter over when the lights go up, the performance ends and the children file out. These performances form the subject of their chatter for many an hour afterward. I speak not for myself alone, when I say: It is worth while!

Two important specialized uses of the motion picture are shown in the following story, sent to us by Mrs. William H. Pouch, chairman of the Approved Schools Committee, and former National vice-chairman, Better Films Committee, Northern Division, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, one is the use of the motion picture by an organization to publicize or tell the story of its activities and the other the use by an organization of the motion picture as an educational means in its various fields of interest. We are glad to pass word of this worthy project on to our readers and perhaps there will be the response that Mrs. Pouch suggests.

SINCE the advent of the 16mm motion picture and the recognition of its value as a medium of recording social and historic events, as well as an aid to teaching, the Motion Picture Committee of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in New York State has compiled films showing activities of the D. A. R. Committees and screened them at chapter and conference meetings.

It was suggested that chapter chairmen take 16mm motion picture programs to hospitals and shut-in friends, and present gifts of projectors to hospitals and schools, thus taking the life of the outside world to those confined to room or bed.

Films were made of patriotic celebrations in Washington at the D. A. R. Congress and of chapter activities, and efforts made to interest members in compiling a state history film from individual sketches written by members.

The film *George Washington and His Times* in 16mm size was purchased by chairmen and shown to schools and chapters during the Bi-Centennial celebration. Flag trailers in 16mm size were used at patriotic celebrations showing Correct Use of the Flag, and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Gifts of motion picture outfits have been made to the two mountain schools founded, operated and controlled by D. A. R. members: the Kate Duncan Smith D. A. R. School at Grant, Ala., and the Tamassee D. A. R. School at Tamassee, S. C. Pictures taken at these schools are shown with resulting interest of members of the Society

in the splendid type of American mountain children, and the instruction in agriculture, home-making and organized recreation which is given to them at these schools.

Because the impression made upon children by teaching films has been demonstrated by many tests, it is the plan of the Approved Schools Committees to institute a teaching film lending library for the use of the mountain schools on the D. A. R. list of approved schools. This idea has appealed to the Presidents of the schools which own projectors and have the lighting facilities, and Mr. Ralph H. Cain, the President of Tamassee, is the Chairman and Manager of this project.

Two films have been purchased: *Baby Beavers* for nature study, and one of the American Statesman series for history and civic interest. These will be held by each school on the list for a certain period and used as an aid to the teaching of these subjects then passed to the school next on the list, keeping up the chain of film study.

Of course, the hope is that the friends and members of the D. A. R. Society will send suitable films to this Committee of which Mr. Cain is Chairman, so that the education of the mountain children may be accelerated and stimulated by the very great advantages of visual aids.

The Committee wishes to express gratitude to the National Board of Review for the privilege of bringing these facts to the attention of all friends of these mountain children of pure American stock, who respond so quickly to any opportunity for mental advancement.

SINCE we receive numerous requests regarding the availability of subjects in the narrow width film (16mm) we thought it might be helpful to list a few of the pictures which the Herman Ross Enterprises, 630 Ninth Avenue, New York City, have for sale or rental. For schools interested in building up a film library they are offering for sale for a limited time such films as the ones listed below at \$15.00 a reel. The

usual rental price for the narrow width film is \$1.50 per reel a day.

Last Stand of the Red Man—the fast disappearing Indian race.

Land of Towering Wonders—atop the peaks in Utah.

Robert Burns—excerpts from the works of the Scotch poet.

Charles Dickens—biography and scenes from his works.

Floating Cities of China—river life in Chinese cities.

Food—origin and distribution of the foods we eat.

Benjamin Franklin—life of the statesman and philosopher.

The Holy Land—a scenic of the religious monuments.

In Birdland—life and habits of the smaller native birds.

Jack and the Beanstalk—the well-known fairy tale.

The Passion Play—the life of Christ (4 reels).

George Washington—a biography of our first president.

The Little Indian Weaver—story of a little Indian girl.

Daniel Defoe's long popular "Robinson Crusoe" has been made into a 16mm film, 4 reels in length, and is for sale at the same price as the above, or for rental at \$7.50 a day. This latter price also includes a selection of short subjects sufficient to make up a seven or eight reel program. Mr. Ross will be glad to answer all inquiries regarding his films.

THE National Board of Review will hold its Ninth Annual Conference on February 9th and 10th at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City.

The topic of the Conference will be "Analysis of Motion Picture Appreciation." This will be presented in its various phases by interesting and authoritative speakers. The Young Reviewers Club of the National

(Continued on page 19)

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*ANIMAL KINGDOM—From the play by Philip Barry, directed by Edward H. Griffith, with a cast including Leslie Howard, Ann Harding and Myrna Loy. RKO-Radio, 9 reels. A triangle story in which the wife turned out to be the mistress and the mistress the ideal wife. Done with charm, subtlety and humor, uncommonly good dialogue and excellent acting. It is put on the mature list because adult minds are those most likely to appreciate it. *Mature audience.*

AS THE DEVIL COMMANDS—Screen story by Keene Thompson, directed by Ray William Neill, with a cast including Mac Clarke, Neil Hamilton and Alan Dinehart. Columbia, 7 reels. Story of a man who goes to any length to get the girl he loves. He almost gets away with his cruel plot but in the end is foiled by the girl and a hobo who has witnessed the black deed. The acting throughout is good and the story sustains the interest. *Family audience.*

LE BAL (The Ball)—From the story by Irene Nemirovsky, directed by William Thiele, with a cast including Andre Lefaur, Germaine Dermo and Danielle Darrieux. Protex, 8 reels. Charming film of French family life with an able cast of characters. Sudden wealth comes to a shop-keeper, his devoted wife and their young daughter and completely transforms their happy and contented every day life. When her now ambitious parents plan a huge ball the young girl decides she must take matters in her own hands. The French is unusually clear and free from idioms so the picture would be interesting for those with a knowledge of and those studying the language, but it is not necessary to know French to be entertained by the film. *Family audience.*

*THE BITTER TEA OF GENERAL YEN—From the novel by Grace Z. Stone, directed by Frank Capra, with a cast including Nils Asther and Barbara Stanwyck. Columbia, 9 reels. Beautiful and delicate picturization of the novel about war torn China in which an American girl is kidnapped by a Chinese bandit, admirably portrayed by Nils Asther, who tries to win her love, but comes instead to a realization of the vast difference between their two worlds. *Family audience.*

COWBOY COUNSELOR—Screen story by John Netteford, directed by George Melford, with a cast headed by Hoot Gibson. Allied, 7 reels. Romance of the old West in which a phoney book agent turns counselor to aid a girl's brother who has been imprisoned for cattle rustling. Hoot Gibson as the counselor, cleverly wins his case. A little unusual for a Westerner and should please the children. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE DEATH KISS—From the novel by Madelon St. Denis, directed by Edwin L. Marin, with a cast including David Manners and Adrienne Ames. World Wide, 8 reels. Rather interesting murder mystery which takes place in a motion picture studio during the filming of a murder scene. The mystery becomes more and more mystifying until a young scenarist who has relentlessly pursued his clues discovers the murderer. The performance of David Manners as the pseudo detective is very good. *Mature audience.*

DIAMOND TRAIL—Screen story by Sherman Lowe, directed by Harry Fraser, with a cast headed by Rex Bell. Monogram, 5 reels. Story of a newspaper man who joins up with diamond thieves in order to catch them. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

EMPLOYEES ENTRANCE—From the play by David Boehm, directed by Roy Del Ruth, with a cast headed by Warren William. First National, 7 reels. Thoroughly entertaining picture with an underlying theme whose seriousness is not done justice to. It concerns the career of a man who puts success above everything—the story includes much that is amusing and a certain amount of excitement, but little depth—the acting is convincing. *Mature audience.*

THE END OF THE TRAIL—Screen story by Stuart Anthony, directed by D. Ross Lederman, with a cast headed by Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels. Western story about Indians. Driven off their reservation the Indians go on the war-path against the white men and Tim McCoy, accused of supplying the redmen with army guns, is discharged from the army. A story that would appeal to young children with plenty of action and fine riding. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***A FAREWELL TO ARMS**—From the novel by Ernest Hemingway, directed by Frank Borzage, with a cast including Helen Hayes, Gary Cooper and Adolphe Menjou. Paramount, 10 reels. A moving and often beautiful screen adaptation of Hemingway's novel whose effect is quite different from that of the novel. Though the characters emerge rather unlike the book's characters it is a poignant film of love amidst the desperation of war, with a lovely characterization by Helen Hayes. *Mature audience.*

FAST LIFE—From the novel "Let's Go" by E. J. Rath, directed by Harry Pollard, with a cast including William Haines, Madge Evans and Cliff Edwards. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Rapid, wise-cracking and improbable farce culminating in a terrific speed-boat race. Crammed with gags and action it makes fast entertainment of a vociferous kind. *Family audience.*

FLAMING GUNS—From a story by Peter B. Kyne, directed by Arthur Rosson, with a cast headed by Tom Mix. Universal, 6 reels. A man returning from the World War goes to work for a wealthy ranch owner who later tries to discharge him when he finds out his daughter is in love with the cowboy. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FLESH—Screen story by Edmund Goulding, directed by John Ford, with a cast including Wallace Beery, Karen Morley and Ricardo Cortez. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. An Emil Jannings sort of story that begins in Germany and ends in America, showing the career of Wallace Beery as a wrestler, elephantine in strength and soft of heart, the victim of a girl and her lover. Beery is excellent, the German atmosphere good—the hold of the story depends somewhat on one's interest in the wrestling racket. *Mature audience.*

FRISCO JENNY—Screen story by Gerald Beaumont, Lillie Hayward and J. F. Larkin, directed by William A. Wellman, with a cast headed by Ruth Chatterton. First National, 6 reels. Drama of mother love. A woman gives up her son so that he may have the advantages she is unable to provide for him. The story is well done though the mother love element is rather heavily laid on. *Mature audience.*

GENOVEFFA—Screen story by Canonico Schmid, directed by Giulio Amauli, with a cast including D. Damzi and G. Amauli. La Jersey Italo-America Film Corp., 8 reels. A medieval Italian romance, heroism and suffering with the color and atmosphere of a tale of knights and fair ladies. Much better than the average

Italian films we see in this country. *Mature audience.*

GOLDIE GETS A LONG—From the novel by Hawthorne Hurst, directed by Malcolm St. Clair, with a cast including Lily Damita and Charles Morton. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. An amusing, often novel, comedy about a girl who makes her way to Hollywood. *Family audience.*

HANDLE WITH CARE—Screen story and direction by David Butler, with a cast including Buster Phelps, James Dunn, Boots Mallory and El Brendel. Fox, 7 reels. A love story in which the girl's kid nephews are rivals of her suitor—brisk, with a lot of novelty and humor, and a horde of youngsters. The love part is only a conventional line on which the plot is hung. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***HYPNOTIZED**—Screen story by Mack Sennett and Arthur Ripley, directed by Mack Sennett, with a cast including Moran and Mack, Maria Alba and Ernest Torrence. World Wide, 7 reels. An hilarious fantastic farce with the old-time Sennett brand of humor, in which circus animals, a hypnotist, a gypsy princess and a Black Crow mingle in a melange of fun in a circus tent and on an ocean liner. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE KID FROM SPAIN—Screen story by William Anthony McGuire, Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby, directed by Leo McCarey, with a cast headed by Eddie Cantor. United Artists, 9 reels. Typical Eddie Cantor humor, slyly smuttish, in a farce about a timid man in dangerous situations, with a lot of pretty girls for atmosphere. Sidney Franklin gives a brief exhibition of his matador skill. *Family audience.*

LAW AND THE LAWLESS—Screen story by Oliver Drake, directed by Guy Armand Schaefer, with a cast headed by Jack Hoxie. Majestic, 6 reels. Western picture of rustlers. The night riders steal cattle and terrorize the homesteaders so that they desert their homes which are turned over by the rustlers to a man for money borrowed. The hero and his wonder horse "Dynamite" run down the night riders. Interesting for juniors only. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LAWYER MAN—From a story by Max Trell, directed by William Dieterle, with a cast headed by William Powell. Warner, 6 reels. Story of the rise and fall of a lawyer. Rising to the peak of his profession a lawyer becomes involved in a notorious divorce case and tired of being the tool of politicians he goes back to his work among the people on the East Side. The acting of Powell is excellent. *Family audience.*

***MADAME BUTTERFLY**—From the story by John Luther Long, directed by Marion Gering, with a cast including Sylvia Sidney and Cary Grant. Paramount, 10 reels. The old operatic tragedy rejuvenated into something human, appealing and often humorous in a beautiful production. Sylvia Sidney is particularly good. *Family audience.*

A MAN'S LAND—Screen story by Adele Bufington, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast headed by Hoot Gibson. Allied, 7 reels. A cowboy accused of stealing his boss' cattle, finally captures the real thieves and proves to the girl he loves that he is worthy of her. Plenty of action and splendid riding. A good wholesome picture. Family audience. Junior matinee.

***MEN AND JOBS**—Screen story and direction by A. Macheret, with a cast headed by V. Stanitsyn and N. Okhlopkov. Amkino, 8 reels. An American engineer brings American efficiency to a construction job in the Soviet Union, and through the competition of his section with the section of a Russian engineer, brings the latter to a point of maximum productivity. Exceedingly interesting, sympathetic, and produced with fine and illuminative skill. Mature audience.

THE MUMMY—From the story by Nina Wilcox Putnam, directed by Karl Freund, with a cast including Boris Karloff and Zita Johann. Universal, 8 reels. An absorbing and fantastic story of a mummy brought to life. The curse of ancient Egypt is visited on present day scientists who destroy the old tombs to bring back mummies and the riches of the dead to British museums. The picture is well produced with just enough horror in it to make it interesting. The acting of Karloff as the mummy brought to life is excellent. Mature audience.

NO MAN OF HER OWN—Screen story by Edward Gouling, directed by Wesley Ruggles, with a cast including Clark Gable and Carole Lombard. Paramount, 9 reels. The story of a gambler who reforms through his love for his wife. Having married a small town girl just as a gamble, intending to send her back home later when he tires of her, the man finally realizes that she means more to him than his crooked business. An interesting and well directed picture. Mature audience.

NO OTHER WOMAN—From the play "Just a Woman" by Eugene Walter, directed by James W. Ruben, with a cast headed by Charles Bickford. RKO-Radio, 6 reels. An interesting story of a steel worker who rises to great wealth. Lured by an adventuress he nearly loses the things he values most—only his sense of justice to the woman who has stuck through everything gives him back his good name. The picture is well acted and sustains the interest to the end. Mature audience.

ROBBERS' ROOST—From the novel by Zane Grey, directed by Louis King, with a cast headed by George O'Brien. Fox, 6 reels. A typical Zane Grey sort of story—cattle rustling, a man of uncertain antecedents who might be hero or villain, much riding and shooting—the more unusual element is an English ranch owner. Mostly juvenile in its appeal. Family audience. Junior matinee.

SECOND HAND WIFE—From the novel by Kathleen Norris, directed by Hamilton McCadden with a cast including Sally Eilers,

Ralph Bellamy and Helen Vinson. Fox, 6 reels. The story of the wife of a divorced man, and the problem of adjusting herself to his love for the child of his first marriage. Done with sympathy and good taste—a good picture of the Kathleen Norris type. Mature audience.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS—From the play by Wilson Barrett, directed by Cecil B. DeMille, with a cast including Fredric March, Elissa Landi, Charles Laughton and Claudette Colbert. Paramount, 14 reels. A story of Nero's despotic reign. The slaughter of the Christians, the burning of Rome, and the vices of the aristocrats are portrayed in a grand manner—spectacularly, with silly scenes of bath tubs and horrific tortures done in DeMille fashion. Mature audience.

***THE SON-DAUGHTER**—From the play by George Scarborough and David Belasco, directed by Clarence Brown, with a cast including Helen Hayes, Ramon Novarro and Lewis Stone. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Romantic melodrama of San Francisco's Chinatown, and a daughter who turned out to be as good as a son to her father. Picturesque in the Belasco fashion, thoroughly unreal but given life by the remarkable performance of Helen Hayes. Family audience.

SUNDOWN RIDER—Screen story by Lambert Hillyer, directed by Jack Neville, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. Columbia, 7 reels. Western story well acted and well handled. A cowboy goes to work for a girl posing as an old friend of the family, and helps her with her difficulties. Splendid riding and plenty of action and suspense. Family audience. Junior matinee.

THEY JUST HAD TO GET MARRIED—Screen story by H. M. Walker and Gladys Lehman, directed by Edwin Ludwig, with a cast including Slim Summerville and Zasu Pitts. Universal, 7 reels. Amusing and rather sophisticated comedy of a butler and a maid who are left a large fortune. They get married and their attempts to break into society and to act the lady and gentleman make a very pleasing picture. Rather broad in places. Mature audience.

***20,000 YEARS IN SING SING**—From the book by Warden Lewis E. Lawes, directed by Michael Curtiz, with a cast including Spencer Tracy, Arthur Byron and Bette Davis. First National, 7 reels. Against a background of life in Sing Sing, the story of a "big shot" criminal who learns honor and ultimately sacrifices himself for another's deed. Interesting, well acted, with many exciting and moving moments. Mature audience.

UPTOWN NEW YORK—From the story "Uptown Woman" by Vina Delmar, directed by Victor Schertzinger, with a cast including Jack Oakie and Shirley Grey. World Wide, 8 reels. The problem of a girl's choice between two men—one with romantic charm, the other most unromantic but solid, generous and good fun. An unpretentious and entertaining picture, full

of human warmth and with engaging actors.
Family audience.

LA VECCHIA SIGNORA (The Old Lady)—Screen story by N. Maria Bonora and A. Maria Dossena, directed by Amleto Palermi, with a cast headed by Emma Gramatica. Caesar Film Co., 9 reels. A film that will prove highly entertaining to an Italian audience and will not be incomprehensible to those who do not understand the language as it has English subtitles. The star gives a remarkable performance as an old lady who educates her orphaned granddaughter successfully concealing from her her dire poverty. The sound recording is unusually good and Arturo Falconi's comedy adds greatly to the film. *Family audience.*

WOMAN IN BONDAGE—From the play "The Impassive Footman" by "Sapper," directed by Basil Dean, with a cast including Betty Stockfeld and Owen Nares. Harold Auten, 7 reels. A British production. An interesting story of a charming woman married to a mean hypochondriac, of her love for an honorable surgeon, and how a footman solved their troubles. Very well acted. *Mature audience.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

SCENICS AND TRAVELOGUES

(1 reel each unless marked otherwise)

THE COUGAR'S MISTAKE (Camera Adventures Series)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
DOWN ON THE FARM (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
DUCK HUNTERS PARADISE—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
***GORGES OF THE GIANTS** (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*
HERE COMES THE CIRCUS (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 7—Paramount. *Family audience.*
ICELAND—"LAND OF THE VIKINGS" (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
ISLE OF DESIRE—Principal, 3 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
ISLES OF LOVE (Zane Grey Diary Series)—Principal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
LENINGRAD (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
LURE OF THE ORIENT (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*
MEDITERRANEAN MEMORIES (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*
MICROSCOPIC MYSTERIES—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
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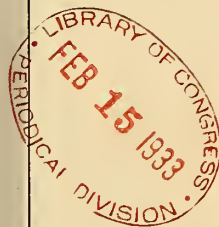
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VIII, No. 2

February, 1933



The mother and her boys at the beginning of "Cavalcade" (see page 11)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

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All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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What Constitutes a Good Picture?

An invitation was extended last month to our readers to submit statements of what in their judgment was a good film, in order to see if from the varied opinion coming in we could not arrive at some conclusions helpful in the rating of future films. At least, we believed, there would be interest in the points of views expressed. The following exemplified estimation has come from Mr. John McAndrew, a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

IF it says something convincingly—it's good. By the same token, I find Bram Stoker horribly real and Aldous Huxley a plain nuisance; it's all a question of what is believable and what is synthetic, literary value, which rarely bridges plot discrepancies, notwithstanding; otherwise Fowler and Hemingway would not run into several editions. Likewise with the motion picture. The structure itself, not the embellishments—often elaborated to cover a bare and creaking frame—gives the picture its pro rata. If a film contains a modicum of plausible continuity, directorial intelligence and smooth characterization—in other words, well enough constructed to be quite believable, I'd waive technical flaws and other shortcomings and call it a good picture.

I consider the following, picked at random from releases of the past few years, examples of films well-balanced by dint of a careful mixing of fundamental ingredients, none of which individually or collectively merits exceptional rating, but having the necessary essence of sincerity:

Barbed Wire—an honest war romance;
The Blood Ship—a good old blood-and-

thunder sea thriller; *Touchdown*—the first football picture not written and acted around two minutes to go; *Quality Street*—the first picture to successfully capture the Barrie whimsy; *Dressed to Kill*—a good gangster picture which sneaked through before Hollywood acquired the machine-gun fixation; *Sinners' Holiday*—the European *Penny Arcade*, swiftly-paced and done with remarkable zest and vigor; *The Most Dangerous Game*—a horror picture that horrified without the aid of electrical contraptions or scientific gadgets; *Young Nowheres*—a city edition of *Tol'able David* and a vivid one; *Smilin' Thru*—a sweet romance, tastefully told; *Tarzan*—good hokum, well faked.

Outstanding individual work gives many a picture a dignity and importance that as a unit it does not have: Jeanne Eagels' electrifying performance in *The Letter*; May Robson's Hetty Green in *Mother's Millions*; William K. Howard's dexterous handling of tawdry piffle, *The Trial of Vivienne Ware*; Paul Leni's supernatural camera in *The Cat and the Canary*; William Wyler's gritty, powerful treatment of *Hell's Heroes*.

The misapplication of these same ingredients, even in small quantities, is wont to produce sad results. Pictures that, by all the laws of ratio, should be of equal merit, are frequently anything but; i.e.: *Lovers Courageous* was a charming, delicately sophisticated romance with brilliant dialogue,

delightful in every respect; *But the Flesh Is Weak* was unimaginative, unethical and painfully self-conscious, a poor attempt to be ultra-smart. Sadie Thompson of *Rain* and Myra of *Waterloo Bridge* should have been sisters, but in front of a camera lens they weren't even of the same race, the latter picture a tender war romance sensitively handled, the former a mess of bad acting and strange direction.

Less tampering with established writings would yield a higher average in production value. If *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* had approximated their respective text and not compromised with cloying sentiment that had no place in either they would have been world-beaters instead of mere freak shows; *Min and Bill*, despite Marie Dressler's superb performance, was a bawdy exaggeration, a far cry from Lorna Moon's pathetic "Dark Star" and an unforgivable sin to the author's memory. Too, there are stories that cannot be exactly translated into terms of the camera; *Call Her Savage* followed the Thayer novel religiously; it was a choppy, uneven series of stilted sequences covering three generations, emphasizing each equally and throwing the picture out of balance since the first two were intended as background for the third. This does not mean that other stories and plays cannot be adapted almost intact; in the case of those that do require alterations, the adapters should not lose sight of the unwritten law that substitute situations should be, if not an improvement, at least equal to the original.

Miscasting, or doctoring parts to suit certain personalities can wreak havoc with good material. Every Ruth Chatterton theme manages, somewhere in the action, to go Madame X; Gaynor and Farrell decided to be melodramatic, and in *The Man Who Came Back* we had Mother Goose out on a bat; Mary Pickford endowed Katherine in *Taming of the Shrew* with all the ferocity of a kitten with its head in a bottle of milk. Quality and style sometimes bear the author's stamp so unmistakably that

they predominate over all manner of screen treatment. The Fu Manchu pictures are invariably more amusing than terrifying; the Van Dine tales, both features and shorts, carry the stamp of authenticity, despite occasional poor adaptation; *The Royal Family*, that peer of modern satire, fairly scintillated with the wit of George Kaufman, and would have done so even without the brilliant Ina Claire and ambidexterous Fredric March and careful direction; likewise *Once in a Lifetime*, which was none too well-screened. A classic example, conversely, of carrying satire far over the line of burlesque into the realm of boredom was Alexander Korda's manipulation of Erskine's *Helen of Troy*; however, *Reserved for Ladies*—also Korda's—has gone a long way to obliterate the memory of the other.

Stories are not infrequently all but completely rewritten and bizarre additions prefixed and suffixed to their parent plot to still further meet supposed requirements, which usually include the unimpeachable philosophy of a presumably virtue-loving public that necessity is the mother of sin and that virtue is triumphant later. The subsequent results, as filmed, have been known to create in a pollyanna-minded public an insatiable desire for more and still more Red Headed Women, whose honor depends on the most attractive bid and who pay and pay—with cold, hard cash.

Its producers found it undesirable that Norma Talmadge's public should find *Camille* a woman whose past was her future, and from choice, at that; so they promptly provided her with a father who beat her and drove her out into the snow and her profitable career in three reels, by which time it was too late to do anything about the Dumas portion of the proceedings.

Metro's prime interest in *Brown of Harvard* was a clever cross-section of college life. It unexpectedly turned into an enormous personal success for William Haines. For seven weary years they have tried to write the counterpart of the breezy, bluster-

(Continued on page 9)

A Sentimental Film Journey - Paris, Summer 1932

By EVELYN GERSTEIN

Miss Gerstein has had a varied background of motion picture activity as critic and as writer. She is keenly interested in the subject about which she writes and observes it from all angles and sources. Last year when in Europe, she gave much time to investigating "affaires" cinematic and has written of them here for the readers of our Magazine giving a picture of French studios and French films. Miss Gerstein was Dramatic and Film Editor of the Boston Herald from 1923 to 1927 and has been New York film correspondent for the Boston Evening Transcript since 1928. As film critic she has contributed to the Nation, New Republic and Theatre Arts Monthly. From 1929 to 1931 she was film editor of the Theatre Guild Magazine. She is a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE summer in Paris film studios and in the lesser film theatres of the Left Bank and the hills of Montmartre where the audience arrives at nine to see the most squeamish of Czechoslovakian hors d'oeuvres and is diverted continuously until midnight with dizzied shots of New York skyscrapers, Mickey Mouse, Oswald the Rabbit, Flip the Frog, and others of the exotic fauna of the Hollywood ranges to eke out a three hour program was not altogether a research magnificent.

The adventures of the Parisian film makers who derive from every country including Peru, are amusing if you are detached and eternally curious. The old theatre of Jacques Copeau, the Theatre Vieux Columbier is the abode of the cineasts now; German, French, Belgian, and King Vidor. Its range, during the summer went from Henri Storck's erotic day dreaming in *Idylle Sur le Sable* to Vidor's *Hallelujah*, with a few old René Clair and Chaplin comedies slipped in between to prevent the patrons from leaving too early.

The Parisian is always alert to an attack on the senses. But the naive sensuousness of the young Belgian, Storck's patterns and walls of moving water, of waving legs on upturned bicycles, of sea-weed, clouds and razor-back clams and crayfish with Freudian crevices—psychoanalytic crustaceans, all of them, despite the luminosity of his photo-

graphs and the rhythmic flow of his compositions, were vastly amusing to the audience that sat before them. It was not the laughter of embarrassment, but a wild-eyed mirth at such serious preoccupation with sexual symbol.

There is a whole group of young men devoted to the cult of cinema symbolism per se. Some of their films were shown at the International Exhibition of Photography at Brussels in July. Cavalcanti was represented there too. But he is still pre-eminently the scenic designer in films, and is doing nothing of importance now. In Paris everyone is a cineast, or at least a man with a camera. Brancusi, the sculptor, has made some sculptural films of his work and has given them motion by animation and the timing of the film strips.

But upstairs in a crevice in the Vieux Columbier, a little lame man with intense blue eyes works night and day, and has for two years, making infinite numbers of small figures for animation: Berthold Bartosch, a Hungarian, an architect with Hoffman and Reinhardt before the war, and since, the collaborator of Lotte Reininger in her film of Prince Achmed that was shown about the country here several years ago. It was Bartosch who made all the silhouettes for her, and gave them that halting, slightly awkward rhythm in motion. The new film is called *L'Idee* and is based on Franz Masereel's little book of satirical woodcuts. It is a silent film to a musical score by Honegger.

Bartosch has been working for several years on animation alone, and under all the difficulties that meet lack of funds and disinterest in the aesthetic, or rather the non-commercial cinema. *L'Idee* was shown once this summer, to an audience of friends and directors and critics. It is one of the most beautiful films I have ever seen, pure, in the sense of its being an entity, self-contained and composed of imaginary figures that move to a rhythm established for them.

It is like no other film, although the fundamental technique is much like that of the Mickey Mouse factory.

L'Idée is a satire on art in a material world. But it is satire with beauty that withstands its propaganda, satire without thumbs. The figures were originally like Masereel's woodcuts, but Bartosch found them too stiff, too lacking in the fluid grace that he felt for them. So he placed his hundreds of cut-outs under layers of glass, softened their outlines with yellow soap rubbed over the glass, placed lights above and below and swung his camera above to photograph them. The result is a film of extraordinary beauty, of sky and bridges and stars and fantastic worlds, of men and women of thick-lined caricature or unreal beauty. The film is a personal expression, lyrical and subtly humorous, a complete aesthetic statement. Bartosch is not bound by reality or the recording camera. He creates his world and integrates it.

The rest was a sentimental journey. The Boulevards displayed Pabst's *Atlantide*, beset with electric signs that looked as if they were advertising Charles of the Ritz and a new coiffure, an erosion of Glynish archeology based on a novel by Pierre Benoit that played to standing-room all summer. As a testament to Pabst, it is



Evelyn Gerstein

incomprehensible except as a summer vacation among the Riffs. There were a few German films of the mountainous sort, like *Das Blaue Licht* with a leading lady supposedly of ethereal origins who looked like Dorothy Dalton in her heyday and ran up and down the mountain sides as if they were papier maché.

Kühle Wampe, which will be shown in New York by the Film Forum, is a fine documentary film, an extended newsreel of the evicted and homeless of Berlin, another version of a symphony of a city. With a limited knowledge of German and the hordes of cyclists who circled through it

to reach the improvised camp on the outskirts, I thought it a film about cyclists. The photography is excellent and it has that surface of naturalness and freedom from studio convention that marks the newer German school, that derives in turn from the Russians.

La Mile is a short French documentary made by Jean Lods, a young French director out of the ranks of the amateurs, with Ladoumergue, the winner of the French mile race, a runner of extraordinary physical beauty, in repose as well as in motion. It is a magnificent thing of its sort, a Greek frieze of motion, arrested, prolonged and loosed. When it was shown in Paris, the audience rose to its feet to cheer.

No Man's Land, directed by Victor Trivas, from a novel by Leonhard Franck, purports to be a tract against war. It is one of those pseudo-scientific films about a Jew, a Negro, a German and a Frenchman, isolated to die in a shell-hole during the war. The Negro dances them into an understanding of each other, and life becomes communal without speech that all can comprehend. The photography is often interesting, vigorous, and spare. The idea is a sound one, but unfortunately as so often with ideas in the cinema, it is not quite convincing, and has as much hokum as *The Big Parade* in its tract. After *Westfront 1918* and *Kameradschaft*, a bare idea must be more intellectually convincing on the screen, and more persuasive as real drama.

The research continues to be less magnificent, with the exception of *Mädchen in Uniform*, which has, of course, already been transplanted. Russian films are taboo by order of the French police, except for showing to invited guests at secret societies on occasional Sunday mornings. *Golden Mountains* reached Paris that way.

Of the directors, there was Jean Epstein, sitting for an infrequent moment in a small cubicle surrounded by huge grey photographs of figures from Michelangelo's *Sistine Chapel*; a little, nervous man with a slight lisp, talking about his latest film made

with fishermen and a peasant girl in still another of the Channel Islands, where great crags of isolated, unused stone like those of Stonehenge face the sea. He had made the film in mid-winter, and was already cutting it. The decadence and baroque splendors of his *Fall of the House of Usher* seemed closer to him than the wind and sea and winter storms of Channel Islands.

Jean Renoir, a son of the painter, a big, resounding man who looks a little like King Vidor, was making a comedy with Michel Simone, the toast of Paris at the moment, that huge, genial decadent of *Jean de La Lune* which was shown at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse in New York this winter. The comedy will be known as *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, and its scenes on location were shot on the banks of the Seine at early morning and midday, near the Quai Voltaire; the lifesaving was done from a floating bath boat on the Seine. It was the first time that exteriors had been taken there and when the entire company came with the dawn to film the outside of some of the old shops that border the river, only a few gutter-cats and women in carpet slippers emptying pails of water in the street were there to see. Soon Paris awoke and when Michel Simone, red-haired and jubilant swung his legs from the railing of the boat that went up and down the river to watch his double being saved from the waves, everyone cheered Simone, from the book-stalls, the bridges and the lower water level of the quais. Miss Paris, 1932 blonde, elegant and eager for publicity, arrived with several Russian wolfhounds on gay leashes and boarded the boat. The boys on the quais shouted to her. She waved back. The wolfhounds moved about fretfully. Simone watched his double. The entire Parisian public seemed to be leaning down from the bridge. It didn't disturb him or his audience that a double was floundering about in the river. Instead of engaging "extras" the assistant director invited the audience to look in the direction he pointed. They were delighted; he shook his hands

at them prizefighter-wise, and they did not disperse. Boudu was saved from the waves. But Renoir was everywhere. No shot, no grouping, nothing was too small a detail for him to plan and execute. Nothing was delegated.

Renoir, whose *La Chienne*, a bitter piece of realism of the Zola-von Stroheim school, grey and lucid and subtly significant in detail, was shown this summer in Paris, is a member of the older realists. His films are built up by detail rather than by progressive patterns of moving masses. He lacks fluidity. It is cold, explicit, brilliant portraiture of the Paris underworld and the lower middle class, the cashier who murders his mistress while the hand organ plays down below, in a scene that suggested Rice's *Street Scene*. Like the Russians, however, he goes to the streets for his types instead of making his actors take to the streets.

There was a casual air about his studio at Epinay, where he worked, for the moment. A small studio like those of the early Biograph days, with low rafters, a small crew and a family atmosphere. The script girl was script girl, general assistant and cutter, and walked about the studio like the little Montmartroise that she was, with long gold earrings, tiny high heels, skirts that looked like Nana, and a black lace shawl wound about her throat. Her efficiency was undeniable, however, despite the air of *Sous Les Toits de Paris*. At noon the entire staff went off to the corner wine shop and behind boxed green hedges discussed the day's work over a bottle of vin blanc or vin rouge and then the studio truck poured them all back again for the afternoon. On the last day of the film, everyone, including the lap dog of Miss Paris, 1932, who leaped down from the top of her piano where she sang, à la Morgan, in husky contralto, dined upon champagne, écrivisses and the hors d'œuvres for which the proprietoire was famous.

There is only René Clair to speak of. Alert, lean and muscular, like a nerveless aviator, poised for action, he sat behind

a spectacular modern barricade of desk and walled in office. He was cool, detached, unsmiling, until he was amused. Then he loosed a sudden, intense smile, and it was over. He talked with rapid, final strokes, accentuating his points with long restless hands that belied the apparent calm. He said that he will not come to Hollywood, no matter how it besieges him, and it has consistently and often. He will waste no time when each year is important to his development. He said that he has seen what Feyder, his friend, has done there, and that he knows that equipment cannot be much better, he has the best of cameras, but his freedom would be curtailed, and he does not need the money enough to adventure unnecessarily.

Clair does not like sound too much, but he believes that subordinated to silence, it has uses especially in music and song. This summer he wrote a note to *Le Temps*, the French daily, explaining his purpose in *A Nous La Liberté*. *Le Temps*, being conservative of mind, however, eliminated whatever was contrary to its policy. Clair's publicity bureau immediately picked it up, broadcast his original article, with the expurgated piece in *Le Temps* to whatever country, or organ was interested. Clair considers everything. He makes no unnecessary or accidental gestures. He likes the bright, muscled surface of things, the madness that is reality. But he is a quiet man, aloof from all that seems to be Paris. He is a worker who can waste no time in delusions now. He said that the only hope for a free cinema of the future is in small, independent cooperative companies, like the one that made *Mädchen in Uniform*.

René Clair looks like his films. They are his expression. The earlier ones, *Les Deux Timides* that was being shown in Paris this summer, *Le Chapeau de Paille D'Italie*, are not so smooth as *A Nous La Liberté*, so well-ordered, but they have less pomp, less self-consciousness. *A Nous La Liberté*, has been influenced by the well-made American films. The pranks of the earlier

comedies were more spontaneous, more amateurish, perhaps, but they were the germs of the idea that suggests more than he can yet convey.

The same studio that had sheltered *A Nous La Liberté* and the exuberances of Clair a few weeks before, the river banks within its bounds where his impromptu fishermen had simulated "liberté," had reverted by midsummer to the origin of nine tenths of the French films ever made—the French Revolution. Still another actor mimed Danton, and a spare ten men paraded back and forth before a lenient camera to suggest the battalions they would evoke on the screen. On the screen, however, the ten men were always to be identified as they turned the same corner without end.

Yet, with that the due course of the French cinema, barring a few other individual talents, René Clair is still considered by his friends of the left, an experimenter lost, a director of ironical and original impulse, but as a man of ideas, a little confused and "palely loitering."

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ing Brown into seven or eight reels; the college pest was pleasantly obnoxious in college but acutely unfunny elsewhere, but he seems eternally destined to roam far and wide, a cinematic Frankenstein, portrayed by poor, unfortunate, capable William Haines.

Again, in *Dubarry*, Norma Talmadge's public was protected from the wintry blasts of realism and were assured of the courtesan's innate purity by her introduction in a lily pond, with Conrad Nagel fluttering hither and thither in a most picturesque attempt to cover her virtue; an aghast, incredulous audience held its gum-drop poised in mid-air and remained open-mouthed and wall-eyed, prepared now for anything—and got it, no less, in the edifying spectacle of DuBarry, child of nature, courtesan in Name Only, braving the guillotine to save her lover's life. Miss Talmadge's audience

walked out and has not been heard from since. Sam Taylor, who engineered this cinematic strategy in word and deed, being adapter-director, did an equally commendable job on *Kiki* and showed Kid Shakespeare a thing or two in his collaboration of *Taming of the Shrew*.

A picture is nearly always good when the characters are developed simply and naturally, not overemphasized and enlarged out of all proportion, like water-colors against an etched background; and in the final analysis, it's more what the director does with what little he may have than all the other elements put together.

Lubitsch alone has never failed to achieve a perfect blending of story, picture and star; he does not subordinate any one to another. Who else could encompass the tremendous range apparent amongst *Passion*, *Forbidden Paradise*, *The Patriot*, *Monte Carlo*, *The Man I Killed* and *Trouble in Paradise*? Could any Maurice Chevalier picture be enjoyable without the inimitable Maurice? Yes—*The Smiling Lieutenant*, *One Hour with You*. Certainly not *The Big Pond*, *Innocents of Paris*, *Love Me Tonight*. In fact, *Monte Carlo* can be classified as a Chevalier picture without Chevalier, and it still stands to-day as the foremost example of musical comedy drama, with marvelous sound effects.

Von Sternberg had no peer in *Underworld*, *Docks of New York*, *Case of Lena Smith* and *Thunderbolt*, and in *Morocco* he taught a garrulous screen when not to talk and how much a sound effect, properly introduced, can heighten dramatic value. Let us hope he will stop figuring new angles from which to photograph Dietrich and give us another *Thunderbolt* or *Docks of New York*.

Lewis Milestone is essentially of the soil; he did the impossible in making an exceptional picture of a literally translated play, *The Front Page*. He suggests what Russia could do if it ever gets away from its social problems. (I firmly believe that Russia could infuse as much power into a Holly-

wood theme as into her own dramas; Hollywood attempted the Russian in *Revolt*; the result was Russia gone Hollywood.) Milestone's forte is such as *All Quiet* and *The Racket*, although he did remarkably well with comedy in *Two Arabian Knights*; unfortunately, in character studies, *Rain* for example, he seems to lose his perspective.

Mamoulian's arresting treatment of *Applause* gave promise of equalling and surpassing Von Sternberg in his own sphere; who could forget his Brooklyn Bridge at dawn, bleak, gaunt, starkly beautiful? *City Streets* was another step forward, but he has done almost nothing of note since, least of all *Love Me Tonight*, which, if nothing else, added another choice feather to the already overflowing Lubitsch cap.

No picture can have everything. DeMille usually tries to cram every possible mention into as bizarre a setting as credulity and a bathtub-loving public will swallow—and it must be said in his favor that they swallow in large doses and clamor for more, a feat none of his imitators can accomplish. *Noah's Ark* had everything everyone could think of, past and present—silence and sound, color and black-and-white, yesterday and to-day—including everything a good picture should not have. *A Free Soul* tried to include all of modern life; it succeeded in being absorbing in a gaudy, highly theatrical way . . . as a stenographer would wish life to be, perhaps. A picture should approximate life. But who would actually attempt the wild, hectic life of the heroine, Jan, or the unnaturally noble Joan Crawford of *Possessed*; the thin, brittle situations of *The Road to Reno*, or the strangely successful *Successful Calamity*? None could have been more impossible than the Cavenish family, or more sophisticated than the people of *Laughter*; but they were real—you believed every word, every gesture, every situation from start to finish.

There will never be any set formula for good pictures, and nobody will ever know why *The Cock-Eyed World* reached the

box-office peak, or how the man who gave us *The Birth of a Nation* and *Abraham Lincoln* could be even remotely connected with the Dr. Seuss-like catastrophe, *The Struggle*; but the motion picture lover has as much right to be jealous of his art as the music lover is indignant of his Brahms with interpolations of "Who Stole the Lock off the Hen House Door." The screen is as yet very young; at a not too far distant date, it will develop its own Ferde Grofé to guide it in rhythmic unity from written to photographed word.

Books Recorded on Film

MOTION pictures are expected to solve two of the greatest problems now confronting the country's large libraries, according to Professor Edward A. Henry, director of libraries of the University of Cincinnati. The solution consists of the reproduction of valuable books and manuscripts on film and the reduction of space now necessary to store such literature. At present, research scholars undertaking certain lines of study are compelled to travel to the great library centers of America and Europe to consult original sources and precious manuscripts which are not permitted to circulate, but the film reproductions will make the majority of this material available to savants everywhere. Thus rare and inaccessible literature and documents from all sources of the world can be put into general circulation in the form of filmed books in the larger American research libraries. The scholar desiring to use a filmed book will come to the charging desk of the library and ask for a certain manuscript. He will receive a number of small spools, each containing about five feet of film. He may be given a small projector, which can be used at a study table in an ordinary general reading room even in broad daylight, or be directed to a special reading

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Cavalcade

Adapted from the play by Noel Coward, directed by Frank Lloyd, photographed by Ernest Palmer. Produced and distributed by Fox Film Corporation.

The Cast

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Jane Marryot..... | Diana Wynyard |
| Robert Marryot..... | Clive Brook |
| Fanny Bridges..... | Ursula Jeans |
| Alfred Bridges..... | Herbert Mundin |
| Ellen Bridges..... | Una O'Connor |
| Edward Marryot..... | John Warburton |
| Joe Marryot..... | Frank Lawton |
| Edith Harris..... | Margaret Lindsay |
| Edward (Age 12)..... | Dick Henderson, Jr. |
| Joey (Age 8)..... | Douglas Scott |

IN *Cavalcade* "sings a gentleman of England" of something gone forever—of the graciousness and contentment that made life so pleasant for the well-to-do during Queen Victoria's last years. He begins with the New Year's eve that ushered in the twentieth century, when the small Marryot boys are brought downstairs to join in the midnight toast while the crowds around St. Paul's sing "Auld Lang Syne": already the troublous future hints threateningly—the young father of the two boys has been ordered off to fight the Boers.

It is through this Marryot family, and especially through Jane Marryot, the young mother, that Mr. Noel Coward is to observe and lament the passing of a day which he seems to look back upon as nothing but lovely and lovable. The years gallop by: Mafeking is relieved and the father comes safely home; Queen Victoria dies; the boys grow up, one of them goes down on the Titanic with his bride, the other goes

through the War and the news of his death comes with the news of the Armistice: and at the end is another New Year's eve, with jazz blaring in the night clubs and the gray-haired Marryots drinking another toast—"Now let's couple the future of England with the past of England. The glories, victories and triumphs that are over, and the sorrows that are over, too. Let's drink to our sons who made part of the pattern and to our hearts that died with them. Let's drink to the spirit of gallantry and courage that made a strange heaven out of unbelievable hell, and let's drink to the hope that one day this country of ours which we love so much, will find dignity and greatness and peace again."

It is Noel Coward's tribute to something he honors in the English spirit just as *The Birth of a Nation* was Griffith's tribute to something he honored in the American spirit. The two pictures have many of the same qualities—they are both stirring and moving, and both recreate the past with a touching romantic glamor. Mr. Coward is naturally more of today in his method: he shies away from the purely spectacular just as he shies away from villains and melodrama: but his effects upon the emotions are very similar.

His sincerity and observation do not work so well together for him in the finale of the film: his picture of England's troubles after the war narrows down to a conventional movie depiction of hectic night life among the rich, summed up in a "Twentieth Century Blues"—

"Who's escaped from these weary,

Twentieth Century blues?

Why, if there's a God in the sky,

Why shouldn't He grin?

High above this Twentieth Century din" which is little more than a Tin Pan Alley commentary. But the whole thing must be taken as Noel Coward's personal expression: perhaps he is cynical enough to think that sort of commentary on what England has come to is most fitting.

The production has been made in the spirit of its material, with dignity, charm and unusual restraint, and a good deal of beauty that lingers in the memory. A cast of English actors gives it the convincing quality that is not supplied so well by the studio sets of London. Diana Wynyard is the mother who holds all the episodes of the film together, with a performance full of grace and loveliness that personifies the author's point of view with beautiful effect. Frank Lawton, Ursula Jeans and Una O'Connor are new figures to American filmgoers who will be remembered, and Clive Brook—long familiar—has a part to which he can offer his best gifts as an actor.

The film is a noteworthy evidence of the progress American production has made in giving adequate cinematic form to a foreign subject. It is impossible to think of any motion picture made in any country which so successfully reproduces the life of another land.—J. S. H.

Ivan

Written and directed by Alexander Dovshenko, music by Iulii Meitus and Boris Liatoshinsky, photographed by Danil Solntzeva and Iurii Ekelchuk. Produced by Ukrainfilm, distributed by Amkino.

The cast

*Konstantin Bondarevski
Dmitry Golubinsky
Elena Golik
Maxim Gornatko
Alexander Zapolski*

DOVSHENKO is among the few great creative directors the cinema has produced. One of that towering trio of Russians, of whom the other two are Pudovkin and Eisenstein, he is the one least

known in this country, and the one least understood. *Arsenal* was shown here, and of all the reviewers who wrote about it, in English, there were not more than two who had any inkling of what they had seen. *Soil* fared better, but it remained very much a mystery even to many people who vaguely knew it was a remarkable film. The fact is that it is just as impossible to appreciate Dovshenko's cinema at a casual glance as it is for a newcomer to Joyce to swallow "Ulysses" at a gulp, or—to come nearer to Dovshenko's special genius—for an ear strange to Stravinsky's music to get all that is in "Sacre de Printemps" at one hearing. One needs to yield one's self to a Dovshenko film over and over again, as to a piece of great music, to learn its complete richness.

Dovshenko is a Ukrainian and a poet, with deep feeling for nature and the simple people who live close to nature. Adjusting himself to the new regime in Russia has obviously been a terrifically hard thing for him: he seems to have none of the hatred that fights for principles and makes revolutions. So his films have not fitted very neatly into the Soviet Union's educational system of propaganda. But he has tried, one can only guess how hard, to understand, and sympathize with, the social reorganization of his country. *Ivan*, his first sound film, shows this struggle of his, and it is probably the most intensely personal expression the cinema has yet achieved. It is also in its implications a picture of what is happening to the modern Russian.

It is about a peasant who leaves his home to become a laborer. His name is the almost generic name of Ivan. He is youth leaping from old Russia to the Soviet Union, a boy from a farm who goes to work on the Dnieperstroy dam.

At the beginning is the great river, in spring, with the ice breaking up. That, perhaps—if we must look for meanings—is vast Russia rousing from its long past, breaking the wintry shackles of its inherited ignorance. On this river is being built the

biggest dam in the world, which will create power and light for millions of people. Workers are needed, and from a peasant district—after a village discussion of this need—a group sets out to help in the big project. Ivan and his father are among them. Ivan is strong and eager: all he thinks he needs to do is put his muscles to the task. He and his father are a pair of the willing ones, ready to put all they have into the new system.

There is another young Ivan who has become a shock-brigader—one of those who know and lead and teach. He too has a father, but a father who won't change. He loves his old irresponsible life, his old habits of going fishing when he feels like it, and he persists in defying the new order of "one for all," the regulated system of working toward a common goal. He is that great sinner in modern Russia, a shirker, bewildered but defiant.

The peasant Ivan goes to work, confident and proud of his strength. But he finds that there is something as bad as shirking, which is doing the work wrong and making mistakes. One of the shock-brigaders is killed because of someone's carelessness or negligence and Ivan learns of that other great sin, inefficiency. It troubles him and breaks his sleep. He realizes that his strength and good intentions are not enough and he must go to school and learn.

That is all there is in the way of plot, and knowing it is something like knowing the outline of "Don Quixote" and then listening to Strauss's symphonic poem. Dovshenko doesn't go in much for the ordinary ways of story-telling. He is more like a composer of music who takes a motif and elaborates it, and weaves it with another motif and another till he has his polyphonic structure complete: Dovshenko does this on the screen with his images. There is the river, first, with its meaning—that long, lovely sequence flowing before our eyes to the sound of an old song. There is the marvelous, almost abstract, sequence that shows the building of the dam: the frightening,

bewildering, thrilling sight that the country boy saw, composed into a visual poem. Even machinery has to yield poetry to this Ukrainian director. There is the grief of the mother of the boy who was killed, stumbling blindly through the maze of mechanical creation, unable to escape from it. (The mother comes back again, in the mass meeting celebration, to testify that she too has learned: she has lost her son, but she can be mother to other sons, to the eager boys who will take her son's place.) There is the stubborn fisherman-shirker, trying to cope with the loud-speaker, that omnipresent mechanical voice of the new order always pursuing him. There is the somewhat puzzling sequence of the army marching and drilling: it is Dovshenko's metaphor (is there a touch of irony in it?) for the regimented workers: we do not see them rushing to the rescue of the threatened dam and putting their hands to the machinery to rebuild the broken section; rather do we see them as themselves a machine, clicking efficiently through their militarized routine, a perfected system that sweeps away all disorder. And there is the incidental picture of the bourgeois couple and their troubles with the radio (somewhat discordant this, thrown in perhaps as some sort of propaganda concession, out of tune with the peasant theme) the woman who always wants to hear the gay broadcasts from the foreign stations and the husband who tries to accept a mixture of foreign frivolity and domestic seriousness.

The film is puzzling at first sight, like all of Dovshenko's films. It gropes a good deal; but it is the sincere (and how masterly) expression of a mind and soul that is groping, an expression as cinematic as any motion picture director has yet created. Its puzzles repay all the study one can give them, somewhat for what can be learned from the film but most of all for the emotions it creates—such emotions as are usually evoked only by great poetry and great music.—J. S. H.

The Eyes Are Up to It

In the discussions of the motion picture attendance of children we often hear brought up the question of eyestrain. Parents say they are careful about the kind of pictures their children see but they ask how about the physical harm received from too long looking at the screen. And we all know how difficult it is to get children out of the theatre once they are in. Is the worry about eyestrain justified? We present below as relevant to this question excerpts from an article on the subject appearing in The Sight-Saving Review written by Dr. Park Lewis.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

UNDER normal physiological conditions, moving pictures do not cause serious eye fatigue. Since viewing moving pictures is distant vision, it does not demand so great an ocular effort as near vision—such as reading for a corresponding length of time. When eyestrain is caused by moving pictures it is due to one or another preventable condition, such as too prolonged fixing of the attention on a single point, or defective visual function, to a bad position of the observer in relation to the screen, to poor films, improper manipulation of the apparatus, to faulty projection or to improper illumination. With these reservations there is no more harm to the eyes in viewing the moving pictures with modern improved methods than there is in any other normal use of the eyes.

In an inquiry which was instituted by Professor De Feo of Italy and presented to the League of Nations, opinions were secured from leading eye physicians throughout the world. The agreement was general in the views expressed. There are four elements to be considered in an inquiry as to whether moving pictures can in any degree be injurious to the eyes of the observer. These have to do with the quality of the film, with the arrangement of the lighting and the mechanism of the motion, and with the position of the observer. The final and important requirement is that his own eyes shall function normally.

The first requisite is that the screen picture shall be clear and distinct. The captions and other descriptive matter accompanying the view should be sufficiently large to be easily read and not so redundant

that the reading may not be easily completed before it disappears. That the film may be clearly shown depends on several elements. The first is the illumination. This should be adequate but not glaring. A glare is an excess of unfocused light; a sharp unshielded bundle of light rays coming from one side or the other or reflected from the screen itself, or from an unshaded light bulb in the dimness of the playhouse, will cause unnecessary discomfort.

The arrangement of the scene itself so that glaring reflections are thrown back on the audience is now of infrequent occurrence, as the good producers are employing the assistance of the best artistic and illuminating engineering talent. It is better that the hall in which the picture is shown be not too dark. Strong contrasts of light and darkness are not pleasant and the details of the picture are brought out with even greater clearness in a twilight atmosphere if there are no distracting light sources visible. It is imperative that the film be run through with just the right degree of rapidity to make the images stand out and to move with the deliberation of actual living people. The beauty as well as the eye comfort of what might otherwise be an exquisite picture is often ruined by the rapidity with which it is shown.

It is also important that films be retired from service after a reasonable amount of use. When they become spotted and cracked either from the heat of the lamp or from too long continued use, they give blurred and indistinct impressions and are neither attractive nor comfortable to look upon. In some of the cheaper picture houses they are used much too long.

The position which the observer occupies in relation to the screen contributes very much to the eye comfort. If he is too close to the screen the pictures become blurred and confused, and defects are emphasized. The same effect is produced if the picture is viewed from too great an angle from one side or the other. Sometimes these nearer

inferior seats are cheaper and are occupied by children whose eyes are more easily harmed by the resulting strain than would be the eyes of older people. Children should not be allowed to occupy these less desirable positions. The best place from which the picture can be viewed is near the center of the hall and directly in front of the screen.

The final requirement, if the film is to be seen without discomfort, is that the eyes of the observer shall be functionally normal and of good visual acuity. When in the absence of any of the defects above mentioned—in the screen, in the evenness with which it is shown, in the illumination and in the position of the observer—there is still a consciousness of strain which is not occasional but persistent, it is safe to assume that there is present some ocular defect that should be corrected.

What for the Children?

A subject of ever recurring interest to those engaged in better films work is "What Do the Children Like?" and thus the opinion of one so experienced in making pictures and studying audiences as Samuel Goldwyn is of especial interest. We reprint here his answer to the question as put to him by the editor of The Current Cinema column of the Brooklyn (N. Y.) Times and Standard Union, giving first the editor's comment. He says:

"The question of what kind of motion pictures are best for youthful minds is a much disputed one. The time has come when women's organizations, almost without exception, have motion picture departments, whose function it is to recommend films that are suitable for children. I know for a fact that in some towns on Long Island the titles of pictures that have won approval are posted in the schools, at public libraries, at post offices and in other places. Thus, the children themselves may inspect lists that the mothers themselves have sanctioned.

The issue of proper movies for children also is a big one in the studios, which more and more are including in their output productions designed especially for the little ones. In this connection we requested comment from Samuel Goldwyn, a leading producer, on 'Pictures for Children.' Here is Mr. Goldwyn's reply:

"With you, I am deeply interested in motion pictures for children. For the problem is as personal with me as it is with you; I, too, have a child of my own. And I know that the child audience today will become the adult audience of tomorrow. I believe stories like *Treasure Island*, *Alice in Wonderland* or *Huckleberry Finn*, even when they are transcribed to the screen, appeal less to the modern child than pictures that have as their foundation the lore of animal life, the conquest of nature or the creation of mechanical or engineering works. *Hell's Angels*, *The Dawn Patrol*, *Tarzan*, *With Byrd at the North Pole*, or *Chang* were vital and absorbing to every child.

"I mean that the principle now widely accepted in primary schools to the effect that the child should be given simple physical things to occupy his hands and mind could be profitably and expertly extended to explain a new psychology of the screen for children. To me this 'doing something with the hands, something physical,' is an element in a narrative picture that gives it a special appeal to a child. Obviously, it couldn't or shouldn't, be made the treatise subject of a full-length film. Personally, I'm not as much interested in having my son feel Skippy's emotional tremors as I am in seeing him absorbed in something colorful in animal life, something beautiful in nature, or something skillful in the use of his hands. I think that the child's diet of fantastic and imaginative literature can easily be filled out of what is already the overstocked storehouse of the world. But the screen, graphic and illuminative, can make interesting and exciting and dramatic what would, in the written word, be dull and uninteresting and possibly unintelligible to the child."

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Exhortation to Exhibitors

PLANS for the varied activities and contacts of community Better Films Councils, formed for the purpose of organized support on the part of the discriminating public of the good pictures, have been available for years. Such plans were first published by the National Board of Review in 1925 in "A Plan for Motion Picture Study Clubs." And in many cases they have been successfully carried out but in other places suggestions to the theatre managers, and from the point, too, of building good will and patronage for the theatres, have met with little cooperative response. It is therefore particularly gratifying to learn that among exhibitors themselves just such activities and contacts are now being seriously considered. Proof of this is given in a recently compiled publication of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America entitled "An Introduction to a Practical Effective Public Relations Program with Demonstrated Box Office Value for the Local Exhibitor." We have been permitted to reprint from this publication and in the excerpts given below our readers will see familiar suggestions in the mention of "family nights," "photoplay guides," "library tie-ups," et cetera. It will encourage and undoubtedly make easier the work of citizen groups with many exhibitors, for what this publication tells him he should do is what community groups would have him do. Addressing the exhibitors, it says:

The exhibitor must face two questions in his community: (1) how can he avoid local municipal and volunteer censors? and (2) how can he tap the potential market of non-customers that exists in every town and city? The two questions are closely related.

The normal appeal of the current pictures and the usual advertising and exploitation is designed to cultivate patronage among the fans, who truly constitute a large part of the community.

Suppose you were in this situation and a famous advertising counsel came along and said he could guarantee to secure without cost the interest and active support of the local schools, ministers, women's clubs, public library and organized public groups in increasing attendance at your theatre, would this be worth anything to you?

You may at first think this is visionary, yet it has been done in many communities. (*We interested in or having a part in Better Films Council work know this. The italics throughout are ours.*) All it takes is a little common sense, a little patience, and a little intelligent effort on the part of the theatre owner and very little expense. The practical results are increased attendance for the less sensational pictures, where it is most needed, and a reduction of unfair and unwarranted criticism from those unacquainted with current motion picture entertainment.

The exhibitor will find on analyzing his own situation that the non-customers in any average neighborhood or town comprise the following classes:

(1) Many persons of exacting taste who fail to realize that there is much that would be of interest to them in the current motion pictures. They still think of the movies in terms of the old silent pictures, westerns, custard pie throwing comedy, et cetera.

(2) Persons of discriminating taste who have been offended by theatrical advertising, by something in a picture actually seen, or something reported to them, perhaps inaccurately.

(3) Children who find the sound pictures less attractive than the old silent pictures and are not so much interested in the

type of dramatic stories that lend themselves to sound production. This also involves the non-attendance of the entire family in many instances for two reasons:

- (a) Many families who had domestic help in the household two years ago now do their own work, with the result that the mother must take the children with her if she goes anywhere.
- (b) In the present condition of reduced family income the father and mother are more likely to go somewhere with the children than they were a few years ago. If they think the children will not enjoy the movies, or that the movies are not good for them, they go out in the family flivver or look for some other type of amusement.

(If the exhibitor follows this advice he will approve the long advocated plan of the National Board of Review—"family night" programs, especially over the week-end.)

In the bonanza days before the depression when capacity attendance was the rule rather than the exception, exhibitors were very much inclined to be indifferent to the possibilities represented by these non-customers. Now such patronage is badly needed at most theatres to fill out the gaps in former attendance. *(This makes any theatre contact work simpler for a community organization as the support of discriminating groups and individuals is now valued and sought by the exhibitor).* This season offers an unusual percentage of class pictures which will interest persons of culture and discriminating taste and a good percentage of pictures suited to the entertainment needs of the entire family.

As suggested above, these non-customers of the theatre are influenced very little by ordinary advertising or theatre exploitation. The reasons need not be discussed in detail here. Nor is the exhibitor always in a good position to make a direct approach to them. *(He is if there is a Community Better Films Council.)* He can and should, however, readily extend the necessary cooperation along proper lines when asked to do so by the local civic groups to the end that im-

partial, unbiased word of mouth advertising and support of selected pictures will be developed in the local community. Given this encouragement the local leaders and groups will tie in with the nationwide organizing of this type of word of mouth advertising. The effectiveness of this plan, both nationally and locally, has been amply demonstrated. Certain essentials are apparent, namely:

(1) The local person who recommends the picture must have seen it or must have in advance information which he or she believes sufficient and authentic. *(The National Board's Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures offers this.)*

(2) The person recommending the picture must be in a position of influence by virtue of standing, recognized good taste, connection with an important organization, social position, et cetera. *(The members of a Better Films Council—representatives from many organizations in a community are such).*

(3) The person recommending the picture must be commercially disinterested. *(As National Board of Review and Council groups are).*

When these conditions are met such word of mouth advertising travels rapidly and effectively reaches non-customers of the class that would be especially interested in the picture discussed.

The problem may then be restated in terms of these groups, institutions or organizations which exist in almost every community where there is a motion picture theatre. To win the active interest of these groups or organizations a mutually acceptable formula must obviously be discovered for each of them *(or more preferably a community Council uniting all the interests)* through which the leaders and the exhibitors can successfully direct the interests of their members into channels of picture support which will show results at the box office.

Having found that formula, the next question is the development of methods by which the resulting influence can be broadcast and multiplied in the locality where each

group or organization operates. (*The Better Films Council plan can supply this*). The methods by which their influence is multiplied are:

(1) Speeches by club leaders, motion picture chairmen, et cetera, on all sorts of occasions; notices of selected motion pictures read at club meetings; publicity on official bulletin boards; placed on reading tables in libraries, et cetera.

(2) Telephone—an illustration of what may be done by volunteer chain telephone exploitation of motion pictures is found in one city where 5,000 families were automatically notified by the Better Films Committee when a picture which they considered of unusual merit was playing in that city.

(3) Radio—within the last two years the various clubs who are seeking to cultivate better appreciation of the finest motion pictures have secured a powerful ally in the form of radio broadcasting. The incentive for this is found in the fact that the Federal Radio Commission is constantly urging the radio stations to increase the proportionate time given to so-called educational programs as distinguished from paid advertising. Twenty or more radio stations are now regularly carrying speeches volunteered by various club leaders on motion pictures not merely relating interesting news about the motion picture industry but going into specific detail in the recommendation of pictures currently showing at the local and neighborhood theatres.

(4) Newspapers—social-minded groups have succeeded to a slight degree in securing space in newspapers for the publication of lists of recommended pictures. This publication, of course, is not in the advertising columns or theatre sections but in the club column or in the news items listing the activities of the local organizations.

School officials, of course, have to be extremely sensitive about attempts to commercialize the school in behalf of any profit making enterprise. But a successful formula for securing the cooperation of the schools approaches the matter entirely from the

school teacher's point of view. It assumes that:

(1) Unless she knows something about the current entertainment programs in the neighborhood theatre, she does not know what is in the minds of her pupils, an obvious disadvantage to successful teaching.

(2) Frequently the motion picture showing at the theatre has definite usefulness in the school curriculum. The teacher of English literature will want her pupils to see *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, *Arrow-smith*, et cetera. The teacher of American history ought not to miss the opportunity presented by the exhibition in her neighborhood of *Cimarron*, *Alexander Hamilton*, *Abraham Lincoln*, *The Big Trail*, *The Covered Wagon*, et cetera. Box office results of the use by the teacher of this formula are immediate and gratifying. In a small experiment tried in the neighborhood of New York with *Cimarron*, there came to one theatre during the week the picture showed more than 2,500 pupils from a single Junior High School. It has been reliably estimated that each school pupil results in the attendance of at least one adult member of the family. When the grammar school or high school pupil comes home with the suggestion: "Teacher says you ought to take me to see such and such a picture," there is no peace in that family until the picture has been seen.

(3) The conscientious teacher is coming to see her responsibility for developing in her pupils a discriminating taste for motion pictures just as she has done for years in other forms of art—music, painting, et cetera. From this point of view a teacher is potentially interested in any motion picture of artistic merit, even if it does not relate definitely to her curriculum. (*An announcement of a plan of school cooperation was made in the November 1932 issue of our Magazine under the title "Experiment in Photoplay Appreciation," noting the work of the Motion Picture Appreciation Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English*).

Appropriate church activities are:

(1) Definite recommendation in church calendars, on bulletin boards or by verbal announcement from the pulpit of specific motion pictures current in the city during the following week.

(2) The use of visual aids in the church program in terms of current motion pictures. It is believed that the most valuable type of service of this sort is the use of a stereopticon lecture illustrated by lantern slides made up from stills of a motion picture.

The modern public library is not content to be a mere repository of books which may be sought on its shelves by the prospective readers. It desires to protect its activities in the community and especially to encourage habits of reading the best literature. The American Library Association has designated a committee which sees motion pictures for the purpose of selecting those which are suitable for library cooperation. Interested public libraries are notified by mail and also by the publication of a list of pictures regularly in the official organ of the American Library Association. Whenever the local exhibitor is showing one of these approved pictures, he can expect to secure the cooperation of the public library to the extent of preparing a bookmark to be printed at the exhibitor's expense, and distributing these bookmarks to all those who take books from the library for a short period before the picture opens and during the run of the picture. The opportunity is thus afforded the library to call to the attention of its patrons by means of the bookmark, a selected list of available books that are relevant to the subject matter covered by the motion picture. Sometime exhibits or stills are also placed in the library on the picture.

In neighborhood and smaller town theatres with two or more changes per week an effective beginning in which the exhibitor can take the initiative is the booking of family night programs on a certain night of the

week, preferably at the end of the week when school is not in session. This merely requires judgment and care in booking pictures to see that all strictly adult subjects are played on other nights during the week. This is a long step in the right direction. If the exhibitor can honestly assure the critical element that on Friday nights his program is carefully booked to appeal to the entire family and to contain nothing offensive and can get them to rely confidently on this assurance, much of the battle is won.

The heart of the agitation for censorship is the "protect the children" idea. Unfortunately many of the motion pictures of wide popular appeal and the greatest box office drawing power are made from dramatic material that cannot be adapted to children's suitability. . . . But of course there is a good supply of suitable pictures for family night programs. What is really needed is to direct the attendance of youth and children to these pictures.

Censorship cannot do this, it can only mutilate pictures and deprive adult patrons of the privilege of seeing fine dramatic pictures because of their alleged effect on a small part of the audience. But organized cooperation between the exhibitor and the leaders in the community who normally set the standards of living, taste and fashion, can establish such discrimination and selection in screen entertainment in a most effective way, removing all of the irritation and controversy that inspires these angry demonstrations against the theatre.

(Continued from page 10)

room equipped with projectors. The picture will be projected on a screen about one foot square in the center of a table. When a professor desires to use the document on a larger scale a darkened classroom will be employed. The Library of Congress, Yale University library and the Huntington University library in California now are prepared to copy books and manuscripts on film.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

DEPARTMENT STAFF

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FRANCES C. BARRETT

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AIR HOSTESS—From the story by Grace Perkins, directed by Al Rogell, with a cast including Evalyn Knapp and James Murray. Columbia, 7 reels. Story of a young aviator who in order to obtain money to back his invention becomes involved with a wealthy adventuress. When he realizes he has lost the love of his wife he risks everything to bring her back. The suspense is well sustained. *Family audience.*

AMORE E MORTE (Love and Death)—Screen story and direction by Rosario Romeo, with a cast including Rosario Romeo and Carmelina Romeo. M. Guerrero, 9 reels. Strong Sicilian story of a father whose daughter was wronged by one of his tenants. Dramatic in the intense Italian fashion, with some pleasant interludes of peasant singing and dancing. A good deal better than most Italian films offered to American audiences. *Family audience.*

ANOUSH—From a story by Toumanian, directed by Ivan Perestini. Armenkino, 7 reels. Armenian production. A formless, beautifully photographed picture of Armenian peasant life in the '60's. Interesting for Armenians for whom there are titles in their native language. Silent production. *Family audience.*

THE BIG DRIVE—Compiled by A. L. Rule, First Division, 9 reels. This chronologically arranged compilation of authentic newsreels taken by the various countries engaged in the World War, shows vividly the horror and futility of war. Suggested for schools and libraries. Worth being kept permanently available. *Family audience.*

THE BILLION DOLLAR SCANDAL—Screen story by Gene Towne and Graham Baker, di-

rected by Harry Joe Brown, with a cast including Robert Armstrong and Constance Cummings. Paramount, 8 reels. Interesting story about an ex-convict who discovers that his wealthy employer is involved in an oil scandal and when the man holds the ex-convict's former life against his young brother the employee takes matters in his own hands. *Family audience.*

CHILD OF MANHATTAN—From the play by Preston Sturges, directed by Eddie Buzzell, with a cast including Nancy Carroll, John Boles and Buck Jones. Columbia, 7 reels. Story of a dance-hall girl who marries a millionaire, divorces him for his own sake and remarries him. An entertaining combination of romance, realism and amusing comedy. *Family audience.*

DANGEROUSLY YOURS—Screen story by Paul H. Fox, directed by Frank Tuttle, with a cast including Warner Baxter and Miriam Jordan. Fox, 7 reels. The romantic adventures of a girl detective and a charming thief—and a reform that is not too serious. Clever and brightly amusing—nothing that a family audience might mind except its wit which is more adult than is often found in talkies. *Mature audience.*

THE DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND—Directed by Joe Cunningham. Principal, 5 reels. An interesting record of a strenuous fishing trip taken by George Vanderbilt which includes catching devil-fish, sail-fish, tiger sharks, etc. *Family audience.*

FACE IN THE SKY—From the story by Myles Connolly, directed by Harry Lachman, with a cast including Spencer Tracy and Marion Nixon. Fox, 7 reels. A sign painter commissioned to paint the face of prominent society girl on a huge sign in New York City, to advertise a beauty lotion, paints instead the little country girl he loves. The first half of the story is good but the last half falls down. The acting throughout is excellent. *Family audience.*

FRIEDERICKE—Screen operetta by Franz Lehár, directed by Fritz Friedmann-Frederich, with a cast including Hans-Heinz Bollman and Mady Christians. American-Roumanian, 9 reels. German production. A pleasant operetta, with

some nice music, of one of Goethe's early loves which was sacrificed for his career. Charming done. *Family audience.*

***DER GROSSE TENOR (The Great Tenor)**—Screen story by Hans Muller and Robert Liebmman, directed by Hanns Schwarz, with a cast including Emil Jannings and Renate Müller. *Protex*, 10 reels. An excellent German picture about an idolized tenor, no longer young, who temporarily loses his voice and his career—incidentally his difficulties with lady admirers. Uniformly good direction and acting, and an interesting story. *Family audience.*

HALLELUJAH I'M A BUM—Screen story by William Anthony McGuire, directed by Lewis Milestone, with a cast including Al Jolson, Frank Morgan and Harry Langdon. *United Artists*, 7 reels. The adventures of a tramp, the mayor of New York and a girl who has lost her memory. A novel and amusing film with plenty of music. *Family audience.*

HARD TO HANDLE—Screen story by Houston Branch, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, with a cast headed by James Cagney and Mary Brian. *Warner*, 7 reels. An amusing and fast moving story of a publicity man who knowing the gullibility of the public at large profits by it. James Cagney is excellent in this role. *Family audience.*

HELLO EVERYBODY—Screen story by Fannie Hurst, directed by William A. Seiter, with a cast headed by Kate Smith. *Paramount*, 7 reels. Kate Smith's, the big girl of the radio, first picture in some ways is a pleasant surprise. No doubt the fact that the plot is laid in the great open spaces tends to make her look less large than you would expect. As a ranch owner fighting a losing battle with a water power company, she manages to take care of her mother and sisters and brothers when a radio contract comes to her aid. *Family audience.*

***DER HAUPTMANN VON KOEPENICK (The Captain of Koepenick)**—From the play by Carl Zuckmayer, directed by Richard Oswald, with a cast headed by Max Adalbert. *American-Roumanian*, 9 reels. An amusing version of the real incident in which an ex-convict cobbler posed as a captain in a German town and made fools of the whole array of army and municipal martinets. A little long but full of pungent satire. *Family audience.*

THE KING'S VACATION—From the story by Ernest Pascal, directed by John Adolphi, with a cast headed by George Arliss. *Warner*, 6 reels. Story of a king, who, in sympathy with his people, abdicates his throne. He believes that he can return to his former life, before he was made king, but finds disillusionment. The story is good and the acting of Arliss excellent. *Family audience.*

THE LAND OF NAIRI—*Armenkino*, 6 reels. Armenian silent production. A pictorial record of the industrialization of Armenia under Soviet socialism, with Armenian and English

subtitles. It is often extremely vivid, particularly in showing some of the horrible things Armenia has had to struggle against. Instructive for those especially interested. *Family audience.*

LUCKY DEVILS—Screen story by Casey Robinson and Bob Rose, directed by Ralph Ince, with a cast including Bill Boyd, William Gargan and Dorothy Wilson. *RKO*, 7 reels. Interesting story of the stunt men of Hollywood. Their slogan "a good stunt man makes a bad husband" is proven false when the best stunt man proves that a married man still has the nerve to keep his job. This picture is interesting as it shows the risks taken by these men and also the workings of a Hollywood studio. *Family audience.*

LUXURY LINER—From the novel by Gina Kaus, directed by Lothar Mendes, with a cast including George Brent and Zita Johann. *Paramount*, 7 reels. Episodic picture concerned with some of the passengers aboard a luxurious ship—a doctor, his estranged wife, a nurse, an opera star, a wealthy ship broker, a diamond expert and others. *Mature audience.*

THE MYSTERIOUS RIDER—From the story by Zane Grey, directed by Fred Allen, with a cast including Kent Taylor and Irving Pichel. *Paramount*, 6 reels. Rather pleasing story of the West of by-gone days. A man accused of cheating the settlers is arrested but escapes with the aid of the sheriff's small son and disguised as a mysterious night rider urges the people to fight for their rights. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

EINE NACHT IM PARADIES (A Night in Paradise)—Directed by A. Potick, with a cast including Anny Ondra and Herman Thimig. *American-Roumanian*, 8 reels. A gay musical romance in which a clever girl makes a hit in high society. The bright characterizations and brisk movement make it good entertainment. *Family audience.*

NAGANA—Screen story by Lester Cohen, directed by Ernest L. Frank, with a cast including Tala Birell and Melvyn Douglas. *Universal*, 8 reels. An interesting story of Africa that deals with what the natives call "nagana"—sleeping sickness caused from the bite of the tsetse fly. Two scientists endeavor to discover a serum for the cure of the dreaded disease. The sequences dealing with the wild animals, the natives and the work of the scientists are most interesting but the love element is out of key with the rest of the picture. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OBEY THE LAW—Screen story by Arthur Caesar, directed by Benjamin Stoloff, with a cast including Leo Carrillo and Dickie Moore. *Columbia*, 7 reels. Interesting story of an Italian who makes good as an American citizen. *Family audience.*

PARACHUTE JUMPER—Screen story by Rian James, directed by Alfred E. Green, with a cast headed by Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. *Warner*,

7 reels. Two flyers dismissed from the army and up against it for a job, become innocent tools for a man who is flying narcotics from Canada. The love element is brought in by a girl who shares their poverty and is in love with one. *Family audience.*

*THE PAST OF MARY HOLMES—*From the story "The Goose Woman" by Rex Beach, directed by Harlan Thompson, with a cast including Helen MacKellar and Eric Linden. RKO, 7 reels.* The story of a recluse known as the "goose woman" who was once an opera star. For the sake of publicity she is persuaded to testify at a murder trial of which she knows nothing but she learns in time of the great wrong she is about to do. A strong picture with excellent acting by Helen MacKellar. *Family audience.*

*RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS—*Screen story by Charles McArthur, directed by Richard Boleslavsky, with a cast headed by Ethel, John and Lionel Barrymore. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 13 reels.* An elaborately stupendous film of the last days of the Romanoffs in Russia and the intrigues of the monk Rasputin. As history it has been touched up by a melodramatic idea of effectiveness, which lessens its value as an authentic record but it gives a touching picture of the doomed royal family. *Family audience.*

ROME EXPRESS—*From the story by Clifford Grey, directed by Walter Forde, with a cast including Conrad Veidt and Esther Ralston. Universal, 9 reels.* British production. Smoothly told and convincingly acted story of a crime committed on the night express from Paris to Rome and the several passengers involved. The atmosphere of the speeding train is faithfully carried through and the various incidents skillfully woven together with a good deal of suspense. *Family audience.*

RONNY—*Operetta by Emmerich Kalman, with a cast including Willy Fritsch and Kaethe von Nagy. Protex, 8 reels.* German production. Pleasant romantic operetta about a prince who composes light operas and the girl who becomes his prima donna. Tuneful and lively. *Family audience.*

THE SECRET OF MADAME BLANCHE—*From the play "The Lady" by Martin Brown, directed by Charles Brabin, with a cast including Irene Dunne and Phillips Holmes. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels.* A moving story about a showgirl of the 90's, who loses her infant son and finds him again during the war when she is running a restaurant in Paris. Dramatic in a theatrical way, effectively acted with an appealing "mother love" theme. *Mature audience.*

THE SHADOW LAUGHS—*Screen story and direction by Arthur Hoerl, with a cast including Hal Skelly and Rose Hobart. Trojan, 7 reels.* A pretty good mystery drama, in which a newspaper man turns detective and solves the puzzles of a couple of bewildering mysteries. *Family audience.*

SHE DONE HIM WRONG—*Screen story by Mae West, directed by Lowell Sherman, with a cast headed by Mae West. Paramount, 7 reels.* Story of the Bowery, on the lower East Side of New York, during the gay 90's. The acting of Miss West is excellent in portraying the hard-boiled type of girl singing in a saloon. The songs are vulgar but in keeping with the picture and the period of the gay 90's is sustained throughout. *Mature audience.*

STATE TROOPER—*Screen story by Lambert Hillyer, directed by D. Ross Lederman, with a cast including Regis Toomey and Evalyn Knapp. Columbia, 7 reels.* A manufacturer who has been threatened by his business rivals, engages an ex-state trooper to protect his plant. The daughter of the man is most scornful of the new guard especially since he once gave her a ticket for speeding but she soon recognizes his good qualities. *Family audience.*

TERROR TRAIL—*Screen story and direction by Grant Taylor, with a cast headed by Tom Mix. Universal, 6 reels.* Western story about some outlaws who use two different sets of horses to confuse those who are trying to follow them but Tom and his horse, Tony, outwit the gang. A good story for children. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TONIGHT IS OURS—*From the play "The Queen Was in the Parlor" by Noel Coward, directed by Stewart Walker, with a cast headed by Claudette Colbert and Fredric March. Paramount, 8 reels.* Interesting and amusing story of a princess who goes to Paris on a lark and there meets her "Prince Charming"—she is suddenly called back to her people and believes that she has left happiness forever. *Mature audience.*

WHISTLING IN THE DARK—*From the play by Lawrence Gross and Edward C. Carpenter, directed by Elliott Nugent, with a cast including Ernest Truex and Una Merkel. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels.* What happened to the timid author of mystery novels when he was forced to devise a real murder plot for some gangsters. Rather slow in movement but with a lot of novelty and a different kind of humor. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Cavalcade—11 reels

Family audience. (see page 11)

Ivan—8 reels

Mature audience. (see page 12)

SHORT SUBJECTS

SCENICS, SPORTS AND TRAVELOGUES

(1 reel each)

ACROSS AMERICA IN 10 MINUTES (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational. *Family audience.*
 THE ANIMAL FAIR (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 BONE CRUSHERS (wrestling)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
 CANINE THRILLS (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DANGEROUS OCCUPATIONS (Lowell Thomas)—Vitaphone. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 DESERT DEMONS (Battle of Life Series)—Educational. *Family audience.*
 HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 8—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 HORSE SENSE (World of Sport Series)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THE MASKED RAIDER (animals)—Principal, 2 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 NORWAY, LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
 PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 8—Paramount. *Family audience.*
 SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 7—Columbia. *Family audience.*
 SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 8—Paramount. *Family audience.*
 SPORT THRILLS NO. 4—Vitaphone. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 26—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THROWING THE BULL—Columbia. *Family audience.*
 WHEN DAD WAS A BOY (Do You Remember Series)—Educational. *Family audience.*
 WILD COMPANY (Naturgraphs)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THE WONDER GIRL ("Babe" Didrikson)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

ABE LYMAN AND HIS BAND—Vitaphone, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
 AS THE CROWS FLY—Moran and Mack. Educational, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 A BRAHMIN'S DAUGHTER—Opera "Lakme." Educational, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 BYE GONES—Ruth Etting. Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 CLANCY OF THE MOUNTED NOS. 1-2 (serial)—Tom Tyler. Universal, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THE DEVIL HORSE NOS. 11-12 (serial)—Harry Carey. Mascot, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THE FATAL GLASS OF BEER—W. C. Fields. Paramount, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 HEAVE TWO—Harry Sweet. RKO, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 THE HITCH-HIKER—Harry Langdon. Educational, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 HOLLYWOOD PREMIER—Eddie Garr. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 LET'S DANCE—Burns and Allen. Paramount, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
 A MOVIE ACTOR (Italian production)—Farfariello. Giglio, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 PRIVATE WIVES—Skeets Gallagher. RKO, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 THE RED SHADOW—From "The Desert Song." Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 SPEAKING OF OPERATIONS—Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
 TORCHY'S KITTY COUP—Ray Cooke. Educational, 2 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THE WHISPERING SHADOW NOS. 1-5 (serial)—Bela Lugosi. Mascot, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CARTOONS

(1 reel each)

ALOHA OE (Bouncing Ball)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 BETTY BOOP'S CRAZY INVENTIONS (Talkartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 BOSKO IN DUTCH (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 HANSEL AND GRETEL (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 THE MAD DOCTOR (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 MICKEY'S PAL PLUTO (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 ONE STEP AHEAD OF MY SHADOW (Merry Melody)—*Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 OPENING NIGHT (Aesop Fable)—RKO. *Family audience.*
 THE PLUMBER (Lucky Rabbit)—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 REACHING FOR THE MOON (Bouncing Ball)—Paramount. *Family audience.*
 ROBIN HOOD (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience.*
 WEDDING BELLS (Krazy Kat)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
 A YARN OF WOOL (Aesop Fable)—RKO. *Family audience.*

How to Make Movies

THE title of a new volume written by Arthur L. Gale and Russell C. Holslag of the Amateur Cinema League is entitled "Making Better Movies." For the purpose of telling you what the book is about we will change the title to read "making better home movies" for that is what it is. The authors are quite well authorized by experience to write on this subject, as Mr. Gale, now editor of *Movie Makers*, the official organ of the Amateur Cinema League, has since 1927 been continuity consultant of the League and Mr. Holslag, now advertising manager of *Movie Makers*, has since 1929 been technical consultant.

The preface states a convincing *why* of movie making in the following words: "Few recreational activities are as rich and varied as amateur movie making. The initial equipment is inexpensive and the periodical supplies are within the reach of everyone who has any money at all to spend on his pleasures. Movie making is both mental and manual, indoor and out, individual and collective, a good weather and a bad weather sport and an avocation that appeals to young and old. It is healthful and constructive. It lends itself very quickly to practical and serious application and it can bring the maker financial rewards." And the two hundred pages of the text give a comprehensive *how* of movie making. This is told in five chapters devoted to the newcomer, the average amateur, the developed movie maker and the advanced practitioner. Such a form is particularly helpful for the beginner and as the book is written largely for the average amateur it ably fulfills its purpose. There is a further chapter on how to use the Amateur Cinema League and anyone desiring additional information on the book or the League's activity can secure it by writing to the headquarters, 105 West 40th Street, New York City.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

National Board of Review of Motion Pictures,
70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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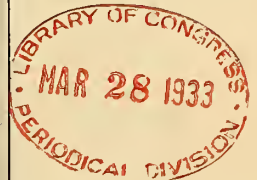
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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John Barrymore in Topaze (see page 7)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into subgroups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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MAR 21 1933

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Summary of the Conference

The Ninth Annual Conference of the National Board of Review was held in New York City on February 9th-11th. At the final session Dr. Francis D. Tyson of the Department of Economics of the University of Pittsburg, a member of the Better Films National Council of the National Board, summarized the Conference. As a review for our readers of the Conference we present here this summary. The different addresses mentioned by Dr. Tyson will appear in the Magazine, two in this issue and the others to come.

I think you will agree with me, those of you who as delegates have been coming to our meetings a number of years, that the program this year has been one of the most stimulating and effective that our Conference Committee has yet staged in the eight previous years at which organized conferences have been held, or in the longer period, covering with this year, eighteen years, in which the annual luncheons have been staged.

There are many parts of the program that we could review with profit. The technical material has been splendid—the presentation of the museum work for children by Miss Mary Mathews, Curator of Education, Brooklyn Children's Museum; review of the tremendous value and power of the sound films in foreign language teaching as given by Mr. Edward B. Ginsburg, Director of the International Cinema League. I think we may all congratulate Mrs. Mildred Wilder Champlin,* Director, Parent Education, Oneonta (N. Y.) Public Schools, on the intensive work that she has been doing in

Oneonta in actually studying the problem of the influence of pictures.

The National Board's program has always been one of getting the facts, trying to understand, to know the difficult and baffling problems with which we are dealing and about which there are such diverse and contradictory opinions.

People in the theatre, as represented by Mr. Edwin S. C. Coppock, Managing Director, Paramount Theatre, Staten Island (N. Y.), are interested in adapting programs to community needs. The Warner interests have so far as Pittsburg is concerned, been willing to do anything in their power to adapt their programs, under the limitations of the big business set-up in which they work, to community demand. Progress in Better Films listing continues as a real contribution in having these separate film programs appealing to groups of our kind published in the public press. Mr. Joseph L. Marron, President of the Better Films Council, has already told us about the successful organization in Jacksonville; and Mrs. Hugh A. Smith's, President of the Better Films Council, work in Rochester (N. Y.), has given similar evidence.

A high light of the Conference was certainly Mr. Harry Alan Potemkin's, film critic and member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board, review and interpretation of the possibilities of special showings of cultural and instruc-

*Mrs. Champlin's address appears on page 14.

tional films, and I think that we are going to get increasing help from the able, intelligent film critics, and I think I mark in a decade a very considerable advance in film criticism; and the newspaper certainly plays a tremendous role in directing and guiding standards of taste in our chaotic and unorganized American community life. One can only wish that more newspapers realized the importance of genuine criticism as distinct from mere film reporting.

Outstandingly the highest spots of our Conference were the two first papers at the open meeting—Mr. LeRoy Bowman's* observation on changing trends in the motion picture with regard to increasing realism in the films and response to new community demand arising out of the depression, and Dr. Frank Astor's, Field Director, National Child Welfare Association, new approach to this whole problem of the motion picture in terms of the interests of children, using the new scientific technique of child psychology. It seems to me that the most constructive, the most penetrating approach to this whole problem, the actual study of behavior of children and needs of child life in reference to film presentations, is to be found in the methods used by the Young Reviewers Group. It has great possibilities.

Still another high water mark was the Conference Luncheon when the dean of American scholars, particularly in the field of behavior with reference to crime, Dr. George W. Kirchwey, in full flower of his intellectual ability and his emotional discernment, presided at the luncheon; he presented the progressive position of the National Board of Review in discerning fashion, checking in advance the reactionary negative approach to the motion picture.

I think all observers of American life and of the world are in agreement that this year and the years immediately ahead of us are going to be years of tremendous change, of rapid change, and I think you will agree

that change is going to be very rapid in this field of our interest, in the motion picture.

There are just a few ideas that I will leave with you. The mass leisure of the American people offers a challenge to the present leaders of the motion picture industry. This mass leisure, as you know, is now enforced by depression conditions. We have somewhere between ten and twelve million unemployed, and a number half that total employed part time. This is a wonderful time for our single outstanding recreational institution, the motion picture.

I think we all agree that for good or ill the opinions, the behavior of our people, including our young people, are being stimulated, perhaps even conditioned, by what they see in the films.

I would like to refer briefly to ex-President Hoover's study on social trends. That study suggests what as economists we have called attention to again and again recently, which the discussion of technocracy that you have seen in the press recently has also referred to, namely, the vast possibilities for new production of wealth, new high standard of living in America, permitting the gradual abolition of poverty and misery in our great country; and I predict the ending of poverty in America with full recognition of the severe suffering in this present depression and of our inadequate organization of relief related in part to our backward and ineffective state system of taxation, necessitating more and more aid from the Federal Government.

For the long run, however, I predict that while poverty will decrease and perhaps be ended, that crime, anti-social conduct, is almost sure to grow, to increase, and I believe that is one of our outstanding national problems.

Economic sufficiency, a high standard of living for more of our people, will not, in my opinion, solve the problem of crime, of anti-social conduct. It is exactly in this

(Continued on page 13)

*Mr. Bowman's address appears on page 5.

The Effect of the Changing Social Order on Motion Picture Responses

By LeRoy E. Bowman

The opening address at the recent Ninth Annual Conference of the National Board of Review was made by LeRoy E. Bowman. It was followed by lively and interested discussion and we believe that it will serve as timely study material for motion picture study groups. Mr. Bowman is known to most of our readers from past articles in this Magazine. He is Director of Extension Activities of Summer Play Schools of the Child Study Association of America and is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review.

THE time has come when the profound changes that are taking place in America are reflecting themselves in the attitude of people not only toward economic institutions but towards those media which reflect economic institutions and interpret them to us. It is about time that the motion picture producer, in order to protect himself and retain his position, take cognizance of the changes that are occurring. I cannot give you evidence of these changes in audience attitudes from statistics or from studies, but I can outline the conclusions of the National Board's Review Committees and Executive Committee, and Better Films Councils and motion picture clubs throughout the country.

First, it seems that people are laughing more at the movies, some of the tender touching scenes are getting more of the razz than they ever did before, not, I believe, because there is any less need now of pathos or scenes of pathos in the mind of man, but because the actual realities of life are providing the tragedy that is filling that need. In the same way it seemed in the last election that there was something of the same response to some of the appearances of rather stilted and formal men. One might say that the newsreel has brought closer to us some of our popular personalities, and that perhaps familiarity has bred contempt.

A second thing that it seems to us is occurring is an enlarged interest in science and scientific discovery. It is sad to say when speaking of this topic that the unwise limitations on budgets that the economy movement

has effected in most school systems in this country have reduced the amount of visual education that our children are getting.

Third, there seems to be a greater interest on the part of specialized groups for particular kinds of motion pictures, and that we all regard as very wholesome.

Then most important, it seems to me, is the trend toward the depicting of ordinary folks in the way that ordinary folks conduct themselves. I want to refer, for instance, to the picture, *Payment Deferred*. There still are, of course, a number of films that represent the rather expensively elaborated gingerbread of Hollywood, but with them there is an increasing proportion of films that lead us to think that we are getting down to the homely things in life.

Again may I refer to the number of gangster films that you have seen, and to say that I, for one, regard them as very wholesome indeed. I think that they are an effort to look at life and to see what it is, because gangsterism and racketeering are real in America, and there is an effort in them to get away from some of the defensive reaction of ignorance, and to see things as they are.

I refer to another evidence of this, the great vogue of the film called *I Am A Fugitive From A Chain Gang*, which is one of the best money-makers of the past season. I think there, too, there has been a real desire to see into the life and into the meanings of experiences that are going on about us. Again the foreign films, especially the Russian, have seemed to bring to us adventure and excitement, but an excitement and an adventure that is inherent in the realities of social life. So with some other films. It is safe to say that we are looking for, or there is a growing tendency to look for adventure in reality, rather than to seek the thrill of vicarious experience and escape from reality.

Someone has said that the beginning of a sense of reality occurs in disillusionment, and much of the literature that has come to our hands since the War illustrates this—that of Aldous Huxley and Ernest Hemingway notably, and many of the books that your mind will instantly call up are an effort to get away from the false thinking of the past. I am of the belief, and all I can give you today is my own philosophy and interpretation, that the movie is going to telescope much of that period of disillusionment and that we are going to get down rather rapidly now to the realities of our own lives. You, then, are probably saying, “Well, what of it? What are some of the ways that we can work toward this end that you seem to see? Do you want the motion picture producer to try to figure out for himself what reality is and then have it depicted in the films?”

My answer is clear and pious—I hope it is pious—at least it is very fervent. God forbid anything like that! I would like very much to have the depicting of anything that is real done by the story tellers, and I would then like the producer to use the reality of the story sincerely and understandingly in his film—I think that would increasingly make for good film production, entertainment and showmanship. Again, I would like the producer to take increasing heed to the interest in specialized film programs. Following the idea long fostered by the National Board of Review, there are certain organized efforts that are being made that seem to be truly significant. The Film Forum and the Film Society, in which groups of people are demanding a certain kind of film and are very critical of what they get, I think are serving to indicate what certain types of audience want produced.

Again, there was a great and an increased demand recently for the family night, so we find in the records of the National Board. This seems to be rather significant, because the films that are now being shown at family nights seem to be more of the best of all the films. There does not seem to be the great

desire to exclude one or another type of picture. As one person put it the other day, “We seem to be anxious to have the red meat of reality and to get away from the milk toast of propriety in our family nights.”

I want to refer to the one thing that has given us on the National Board a thrill of new experience—that is the organization of the young reviewers. From fifty different schools and clubs, 400 different young reviewers aged from 9 to 18 are looking at films and saying honestly what they think. There are no taboos amongst the youngsters, thank heavens. Not only are they criticizing films; they are getting a critical attitude toward whatever they may see. They are exercising that critical attitude toward the subjects of the films and in the process are raising fundamental questions about social institutions. Perhaps if in this modern age we aren't giving to the youth the girdle of righteousness—if that is the theological term I should apply to it—with which they may face sin, at least we are giving them the tough, impenetrable skin of a critical and objective attitude toward life.

In summary I want to say that I believe that the day of the movie which devotes itself merely to diversion is over, and that we the people are looking for real stuff in the movies today. We are a little tired of what might have been if every one personally and individually had been born and reared wealthy, handsome and athletic; we are more anxious to know what is happening to us and what is going to happen to us collectively. The movie has a real function to perform and a real duty to fulfill in helping to hold up before us the realities of our social life.

We are turning from the unrealities of the past to what we are hoping may come in the future. We are getting away from the idea that we must protect those whose minds we think are less able than ours, and as the future of America is to be determined by those youngsters who now are looking at films, so I think that we are finding that we ourselves, are getting a picture of life and

(Continued on page 13)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Topaze

Adapted from Marcel Pagnol's play by Ben W. Levy, directed by Harry D'Arrast, photographed by Lucien Andriot, produced and distributed by RKO Radio Pictures.

The cast

Auguste Topaze.....John Barrymore
Baron de Latour-Latour.....Reginald Mason
Coco.....Myrna Loy
Baroness de Latour-Latour.....Jobyna Howland
Charlemagne de Latour-Latour.....Jackie Searle
Henri.....Albert Conti
Dr. Bomb.....Luis Alberni
Dr. Stegg.....Frank Reicher

TOPAZE exists in at least four forms: as a French play in French, as a French play in English acted in this country by Frank Morgan, as a motion picture made in France and as a motion picture made in Hollywood. This last incarnation need have no fears about standing up to be compared with the others, for it has its own peculiar and important virtues, which mostly spring from subduing irony and satire to humanness: something in Gallic sting is put aside thereby, but something warm and likable is gained, without any serious loss of effectiveness. For American audiences the Hollywood version is beyond doubt the best, not because it is "written down" for them—it isn't—but because it is a translation not merely of the play but of the spirit of the play in terms that subtly remove much of the foreignness that might easily have kept the picture outside the sympathy of those who are bewildered, and therefore

bored, by things too much outside their own experience.

Which is not to say that the play has been Americanized: the direction of Mr. D'Arrast keeps the atmosphere unmistakably French in spite of English signs on buildings and actors who are Latin but not Gallic, like Albert Conti and Luis Alberni, or inextinguishably American like Jobyna Howland and Jackie Searle.

The story is fundamentally pretty serious: nothing less than an encounter between ideals and practical life, wherein ideals suffer a shocking eye-opener. But happily it is more than that—it is delightful comedy, in which a kindly Spirit of Irony takes things in hand and readjusts them, and makes the eye-opened victim the instrument of a quaint and gay poetical justice.

Topaze is a shabby, earnest, unworldly professor, a researcher in chemistry and a teacher of small boys, the butt of his headmaster's snobbishness and his pupil's mischief, most conscientiously trying to do his job and also inspire his unruly boys with a reverence for right, honesty and justice, which he believes shine as triumphantly in the world of men as they do from the mottoes on his schoolroom walls. His great ambition in life is to get the Republic's decoration for his chemistry text-book. Suddenly he is out of a job through his stubborn stand for truth and justice: he refuses to give high marks to the lazy and ignorant small son of an influential baroness.

BULLETIN

1933

Exceptional

Cavalcade

Ivan

M

Topaze

Honorable Mention

Der Hauptmann von
Koeppenick

Accidentally he comes to the attention of the baroness's baron, through the baron's charming mistress. The baron is looking for the name of a scientist to attach to a worthless mineral water from which he expects to make a fortune. Topaze is installed in the laboratory at a fine salary where he happily believes he is doing good in the world, till he discovers that Sparkling Topaze, the widely advertised and widely selling mineral water, is not compounded according to his excellent formula but is actually no better than ditch water. Then he sees, realistically, that in this world, fortune and happiness do not come as the reward of virtue as in the fairy tales: dishonesty and chicanery have much to do with it. Being a realist and a practical man, he acts on his new knowledge and by following the baron's own methods puts himself into a powerful position in the baron's company, where honors and his coveted decoration come to him with hardly the lifting of a finger.

But as the fawned on guest of honor to distribute prizes at the school from which he was discharged he has a chance to demonstrate the triumph of virtue and justice just for once to his old pupils: the prize intended for the baron's ignoramus son he awards where the examination shows it really belongs. And rides off to a movie with the baron's mistress.

The adaptor and the director and the art director and the scene designer have combined to make a real and peculiarly memorable motion picture of this story. It moves—against the wittily contrived settings the people have a heightened cinematic life which tells much to the eye without the eye's realizing how much it is being told, and the dialogue is never superfluous: it always adds something essential either to the plot or to the characters. And the whole thing is warmed most ingratiatingly by such a performance as only John Barrymore can give when he is at his best. Gone are the struttings and profilings of his Perfect Lover roles: he is actually Topaze—a Barrymore Topaze, but what good actor does not put

his personal stamp on even his most diversified parts?—a character of quaint outline but unmistakable spirit whom one must smile at but also respect, and which will stick in the memory as a figure vividly itself, different in a live and important way from any other figure Barrymore has created.

Myrna Loy adds an unobtrusive eloquence to the picture, quietly supplying something highly important to its effectiveness, and Reginald Mason, known better to the stage than to the screen, makes a nicely pointed contrast for the professor. Frank Reicher, expertly embodying himself in the person of the headmaster, Albert Conti with his amiable continentalism, and the unnamed actors who so Gallically contribute to the joyous scene of Topaze's decorating, all do their very unnegligible bits.

There was a time when such a worldly picture as this would not have been dared upon the American screen, with the questions it might raise about how successful people really get that way. But things do move, including moving pictures. It is pleasant to note that such a wise and withal so kindly comedy can not only be made so well, but that the attempt to make it can be ventured without fear of reprisals from those censor-minded who want to face nothing on the screen that doesn't derive directly from the two-dimensional plots of the fairy tales.—J. S. H.

M

Written by Thea von Harbou, directed by Fritz Lang, photographed by Fritzarno Wagner, Gustav Rathje, Karl Vash and Karl Vollbrecht, produced by Nerofilm, distributed by Foremco Pictures Corporation.

The cast

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>The Murderer</i> | Peter Larve |
| <i>The Mother</i> | Ellen Widmann |
| <i>The Child</i> | Inge Landgut |
| <i>The Safe-Breaker</i> | Gustaf Grundgens |
| <i>The Burglar</i> | Fritz Gnass |
| <i>The Card Sharper</i> | Fritz Odemar |
| <i>The Pickpocket</i> | Paul Kemp |
| <i>The Confidence Trickster</i> | Theo Lingn |
| <i>The President of Police</i> | Ernst Stahl-Nachbaur |
| <i>The Minister</i> | Franz Stein |
| <i>Superintendent Lohman</i> | Otto Wernicke |
| <i>Superintendent Groeber</i> | Theodor Loos |
| <i>The Blind Beggar</i> | Georg John |
| <i>Counsel for the Defense</i> | Rudolf Blumner |

The WatchmanKarl Platen
The Criminal ChiefGerhard Bienert
The LandladyRosa Valetti
A Lady of the TownHertha von Walther

M is the first talking film made by the director of *Siegfried* and *Metropolis*. It was made in 1931, but it has only now reached the public in this country: the wait, however, has not impaired its virtues as a motion picture.

It has the outlines of melodrama: *M* stands for murderer, and the entire action is given to the chase and capture of a murderer. But it is written and directed with such imagination and such skillful use of suggestion, and acted with such profound human understanding, that melodrama is a misleading word to describe what its whole effect achieves.

It is founded on an actual murder case in Düsseldorf, where a series of child murders sent a wave of horror and dread over the whole country. The unusual activities of the police in their search for the murderer so upset the lives of the underworld community that they also organized to hunt down the disturber of their peace. The parallel lines of this search, eventually interlocking, give the story the interest of a double-barrelled detective tale.

The first episode shows admirably the method and flavor of the whole picture. It is entirely cinematic, with sound and dialogue used only to supplement what the camera shows to the eye. We are first made aware that a murderer is at large, a murderer of children. Then we see how a little girl on her way home from school is enticed away by someone—a man whose identity and even whose features are skillfully kept indefinite so that even though we see him he remains a mystery. There are no gruesome details disclosed: entirely by suggestion is built up the anxiety and final despairing realization of the mother, and the baffling methods of the criminal. At the end we know essentially what has happened, more through our imagination than through what we have actually seen, and at the end we

have two clues, known also to a blind peddler of toys (we are as blind as he is to their ultimate significance): that the criminal reaches his victims through their childish interests and that he whistles a tune—a curiously ominous tune, strangely suggestive of something symptomatic.

Then comes the effect of the mass terror and suspicion on the whole community: the most harmless incidents are magnified into dangers, the most harmless people are liable to be suspected by the nervous mob and subjected to scared mob violence. The life of the whole community is terrorized and unendurable.

The police become superactive: every individual with any irregularity in his life becomes an object of suspicion, and those who make their livings outside the law, from the mild deceits of begging to the organized plunderings of the underworld, find their whole existence disordered and threatened by the incessant raids and watchfulness of the law. They determine to rid themselves of this criminal, who is not one of their own kind and who is ruining all their rackets for them.

Then we have the two hunts beginning: the heads of police (only whose external activities we have seen) begin applying their exhaustive scientific German system of detection, which is shown in fascinating detail. The underworld, with all its ramifications of criminals, beggars and bums, organizes itself to find the murderer. The police, inexorably narrowing their search through the theory that their man is abnormal, not an ordinary criminal, get on the right trail but are baffled by the apparent failure of certain clues. They have just ironed out these difficulties and are waiting for their man to return to his lodgings when the blind toy-seller hears a whistled tune: it sets an obscure train of association running in his mind and ends in a burst of light—and the underworld is on the scent.

Meantime we have become better acquainted with the murderer—we know what he looks like, and a good deal of what he is,



The identification of the murderer by the blind man in the picture "M"

the kind of temptation he is the victim of, and how it affects him. Now we see him yielding to one of those temptations which we know is to lead to horrors and death. But the blindman's ears have set the chase agoing—the symbolic "M" comes in, that white chalked letter which is suddenly slapped on the criminal's shoulder like a brand, and man after ragged man takes up the trail till its wearer becomes aware of the pursuit and deserting his victim flees desperately.

From now on the sweep of the chase—the long hunt and the capture, so intricately thorough, and outside the smaller circle of the murderer and his underworld captors the systematic, relentless closing-in of the police: the picture has built up a profound respect for the police, who only momentarily lost their lead in the pursuit through the accident of the blindman's memory.

The climax is a trial of the murderer by the underworld in a deserted factory, and here for the first time words become more important than action for the understanding of the audience: the murderer tries to explain himself, the terrible urge that drives him to his crimes, the pathological compulsion that makes him what he is.

The end is the arrival of the officers of the law, the neat, pat ending of melodrama. It is unsatisfactory, because problems have been raised that are not solved by such an ending. We have seen so clearly and vividly into the psychology of a particular murderer, and a particular type of mental disease, that we want to know more about what can be done with such cases than the mere fact that he was caught. Probably that knowledge is something even specialists are in doubt about, and could not be effectively put into a screen story.

The picture is longer than American audiences are used to. Perhaps it could be shorter and be just as effective, but details that are in themselves tremendously interesting—such as the police methods—would have to be sacrificed. As it is the picture, technically, is a superb piece of screen narrative. What is called the scenario is a remarkable work of construction, and the director has brought it to life with masterly vividness. The acting, from the supreme performance of Peter Lorre as the pathological criminal to the smallest beggar bit, seems to be flawless. Out of the huge cast the men who acted the chief police officers and the leaders of the underworld stand out memorably.

M is an important film, not merely because it is made with extraordinary skill but because it is profoundly disturbing. No thoughtful person can see it without a heightened awareness of deep mysteries of human behavior that are not to be solved by mere acts of capture and punishment. Only to a superficial understanding can the film seem morbid—its implications reach much further than the mere horrors and excitements of a murder story.—J. S. H.

Der Hauptmann von Koepenick

(The Captain of Koepenick)

*Adapted by Carl Zuckmeyer from his own play,
directed by Richard Oswald, photographed by
Ewald Daub, produced by Sübfilm, distributed by
Kinematrade, Inc.*

The cast

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Wilhelm Voigt..... | Max Adelbert |
| Kallenberg..... | Willi Schur |
| A. Wormser..... | Hermann Vallentin |
| Wabschke..... | Emil Wabschke |
| Willy..... | Peter Wolf |
| Dr. Obermueller..... | Max Guelstorff |
| Marie Hoprecht..... | Ilse Fuerstenberg |
| Friedrich Hoprecht..... | Friedrich Kayssler |
| Frau Obermueller..... | Kaethe Haack |
| Sergcant Kilian..... | Hermann Speelmans |
| Colonel..... | Paul Otto |
| Passport Commissioner..... | Alfred Beierle |
| President of Police..... | Heinrich Schroth |

THIS film, like *M*, was founded on an actual happening, but it is a film of the most different sort possible. It is comedy, or satire, or both, as you choose to take it.

It is about an old man who has spent several terms in jail—a harmless old fellow whose crimes must have been of a pretty mild calibre. Jail seems to be no great hardship to him, for he spends his time there cobbling, contentedly enough. When he is released once more he is unable to get work because he has no passport, and he can get no passport because he has no job. The vicious redtape circle makes him very indignant with the whole system of things. In a pawnshop he finds a captain's uniform—at least the outer visible portions of one—dons them in a Herrenabart and on his emergence finds himself saluted by everyone in sight. He tries the effect of his appearance on a squad of soldiers he meets on their way somewhere—they obey his orders instantly and without question. At the head of this squad he entrains for Koepenick, where he takes possession of the town hall and the whole city government, puts the mayor and the city treasurer under arrest and sends them under guard to Berlin, takes all the money in the city treasury and resigns his commission—that is, he returns to the Herrenabart and removes his captain's overcoat. The hoax gets into the newspapers, flies around the world—everyone, including the Kaiser, roars with merriment over it. He has become a hero—but the hero has vanished. At length the old man turns up and offers to produce the lost imposter under certain conditions. The conditions are accepted and he announces that he is the man they want: he has the city funds of Koepenick, of which he hasn't spent a pfennig, as proof. The conditions are that after he has served his new sentence he shall be given a passport.

He got the passport.

It is comedy of a rare kind, brilliantly acted by Max Adelbert and an excellent company.—J. S. H.

Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Americana

THE folk-ways of our country contain a mine of picturesque material for the movies, though aside from the eternal Westerns, which generally follow a trite formula that has little contact with the actual soil from which they sprang, film producers show little inclination to dig it out. But recently there have been three entertaining pictures that are conspicuously indigenous—no other land could have grown them. *State Fair*—rural—belongs to today, though it might have been yesterday or the day before. *She Done Him Wrong* is decidedly urban, definitely New York and the Bowery of about the nineties. *The Great Jasper*, though its theme and central character are timeless, happens to have been set in a particular period that give its externals an air of the past. All of them are worth while as entertainment, and each of them has a specific contribution to make to the panorama of our social history.

State Fair departs somewhat from the novel from which it was derived, discarding one of the novelist's chief points and keeping safely within the bounds of what is considered safe and wholesome for a family audience. The picture suffers no serious loss by this discard—the chief thing is the atmosphere of country people at state fair time, when the rewards for the year's work come along. The community rivalries in pickling and preserving and hog raising come to their annual climax, agreeably and refreshingly, with a David Harumish flavor that appears on our screen in its genuine essence all too rarely. There have been more exciting romances in the cinema than *State Fair* provides, but Ma's triumphant collection of all the housewife prizes and Blue Boy's sudden display of his stronger hog nature, are novel and colorful. Readers of the novel will find many of the characters translated into terms of certain stars, but

they will not mind if they like Janet Gaynor's charming janetgaynoring and Will Roger's perennially consistent performance of Will Rogers.

She Done Him Wrong is a horse of another color, and another stable. It will be used to exploit Mae West, probably, and Mae West is a stage player of chiefly metropolitan repute whose name may not attract many movie-goers in places distant from Broadway. But it is a vivid picture of an era that had a lot of crude color in it: the era of "Ask Dad—he knows!" of Sweet Caporal cigarette pictures and comic valentines, of "The Bowery—The Bowery—I'll never go there any more," of saloons and abundant hips and bosoms and garish diamonds and unashamed political chicanery. Its story is fairly stilted melodrama, its atmosphere bawdy and Mae West dominates it by sheer assurance and vitality rather than by histrionic skill, but it is somehow remarkably alive, a genuine recreation of the past.

The Great Jasper creates—it manages really to create—a character: that of a naïve philanderer, a man whose likableness and virility take him everywhere and get him nowhere, who always loves and admires his nagging wife and can go through life always thinking of the mother of his unacknowledged son as Mrs. McGowd. Beneath its cheerful exterior the story more than hints at a pretty devastating sort of futility—so much charm and exuberance wasted, or worse. Jasper starts as a horse-car driver and ends as an Atlantic City fortune teller: the externals of his career do not matter much, the man himself is the truth of the thing. Richard Dix is not a good enough actor to absorb the tricks by which the outside of the character is built up and make them part of himself—such things as an involuntary wink, a habit of talking to his cane and of continually repeating certain

phrases; these devices seem no more than a part of his costume, not an expression of the inner Jasper. But he has a certain heartiness that helps to make Jasper real. Jasper's wife, on the other hand, is extremely, almost painfully real, because Florence Eldridge plays her from inside, understanding the character thoroughly and knowing how to externalize the character in terms of acting.

It is too bad that the same expert eye which made *She Done Him Wrong* so accurate a picture of its time did not guard against some of the anachronisms of *The Great Jasper*. We may not always expect great stories and great acting from the movies, but we must by now have reached the stage of technical competence where we have a right to expect the production details to be correct.—J. S. H.

Motion Picture Responses

(Continued from page 6)

an evaluation of motion pictures that is more real and substantial and satisfying when we look at them through the eyes of youth.

It seems to me, then, that the demand of the modern audience is that the function of motion pictures shall be to see life whole, to see life real. Especially when we look at movies through the eyes of youngsters; they can bring us life and adventure. They can also bring us some of the hope that a world in depression sadly needs, and with the hope a renewed and reassuring confidence.

Summary of the Conference

(Continued from page 4)

field we have seen and heard in these discussions that the motion picture is most important.

American life needs today the vital aid of this new dramatic instrument. We can present effectively, dramatically, the complex of human motives, the perversions and distortions of life so well illustrated in the splendid German film* we saw night before last, that lie back of criminal conduct and the social maladjustment that gives rise to

anti-social behavior, and I like the suggestion of Mr. Bowman and others that as a beginning in dealing with an interpretation of the motives of criminal behavior we should not deplore the widespread popularity of the new racket or gangster or crime film, although I hope that such films are merely a premonition and intimation of the finer films that we may expect when greater talents are available in the American film. Miss Fannie Hurst called attention to the fact that what the motion picture in America really needs is more scenario writers of ability, as it needs so sadly more actors and actresses of ability. There are a few of our new performers and artists from Europe, Miss Greta Garbo, Mr. Francis Lederer who was with us yesterday, and others who have shown what we need.

Technically, I think we all agree the American film is splendid, but we need the kind of scenarios that are constructed, as that German film was constructed night before last, with every actor a star and not a mediocre production with a star or two.

I think we are going to have rapid advance in the artistic and the constructional phase of motion pictures; and finally, I believe that the motion picture will become a fine tool, ready at hand for community use in our approaching contest with crime and the criminal elements in the community, because we are realizing now not only with the Wickersham report but in every city the growing costs of crime and social maladjustment. This implies, of course, that to the technical adequacy of the American film will soon be added the same unlimited scope for achievement, for artistic achievement, that the best literature and drama have expressed.

I believe that the American motion picture, both as an art form and as an intellectual medium, is coming of age, and I hope that the National Board of Review is going to play an increasingly significant role in hastening that growth of our splendid new child, the motion picture, to intelligent and artistic adulthood.

* The film "M" reviewed on page 8.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Choosing the Family Audience Picture

By MRS. MILDRED WILDER CHAMPLIN

At the recent Annual Conference of the National Board of Review Mrs. Champlin presented on the program the subject "Selected Programs for Family Patronage: What Kind of Pictures Do Parents Want? What Kind of Pictures Do Children Want—and Why?" Mrs. Champlin from her wide activity and experience in phases of parent education and child study was well qualified to handle this topic. She has had experience in teaching in the Philadelphia settlements, as assistant matron in the Hudson Training School for Girls, of study in the Psychiatric Clinic of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and in mental testing in the Baltimore Public Schools, also of study at the nursery schools at Vassar College and is at present Director of Parent Education in the Oneonta (N. Y.) Public Schools and Head of the Home Economics Department of Hartwick College. She is a member of the Better Films National Council of the National Board. We print herewith her contribution which presents an activity adaptable to other communities so that it may reach a larger audience.

TWO statements come to my mind with startling clearness when I think of the future our children must face. One given by a prominent educator at a recent conference of professional workers in Child Development and Parent Education at Albany, N. Y.; "We may expect 20% of the adult population to be permanently unemployed; the work of the world will be done on four days of the week during 6 hours a day by the other 80%." The other statement I read in Harpers Magazine during the summer of 1929: "At the present rate 1 out of every 25 people in New York State today will spend some time during his life in an institution for the mentally ill."

If such are the future hazards which our children must face we must prepare them for the one and safeguard them against the other. These two problems—the one of leisure time, that is free time, time not used for gainful occupation—and that of our own and our children's well-being are pertinent questions to consider during this discussion.

These statements are not as unrelated as one might think on first consideration. The way we spend these hours of so-called un-gainful occupation will largely determine our ability to lead sane well-balanced lives. Parents are asking what may the movies do to help us during our leisure hours to enrich and stabilize our mental living.

The films have almost unlimited use in the field of education for the teaching of knowledges, skills and facts and are being more widely used every day. Every well equipped school plant has a moving picture outfit which supplements texts and teacher. Parents will do well to encourage their use.

The questions asked of me here are: What kind of family audience programs do parents want—and why? What kind of programs do children want—and why? During the past month 2,000 questionnaires were sent out by the Parent Education Association in Oneonta, N. Y., a small city of 13,000 inhabitants having two theatres under the Fox management. A weekly guide to selected motion pictures showing in our local theatres has been printed in our one daily paper on each Monday morning for the past six years. This guide is prepared by the Educational Council, whose director is a member of the Board of Education of our city schools. The National Board of Review furnishes the information upon which we base the selections.

1,005 questionnaires were returned and formed the basis for this study of the wishes of parents and children regarding their motion picture entertainment. 62 parents and 993 school and college students replied. The parents questioned were those having children in our city schools, 60 who had attend-

ed the Institute of Euthenics at Vassar College during the summer of 1930, and 40 selected educators having children of the movie going age.

We were well aware of the fact that a questionnaire presented to parents and children would be answered according to what the child and adult had been subjected to recently in the largest number of cases. Reasons on the whole would be those expected but we hoped for a few replies which would include statements from thoughtful parents who had seen the best and recognized their worth. The results of these questionnaires are only an indication of those values which were given the greatest weight in consideration of the pictures seen.

A few had had opportunities to see such pictures as *Mädchen in Uniform* and *Cavalcade*. They desired "to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere."

Some of those who took time to go back into the recesses of their mind said, "I have always longed for my little daughter to see *Little Women* which I loved" or "Can't we have some of the old ones—*Peter Pan*, *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Robin Hood*." They were all remembered and desired for their children.

46% of the family audience, composed of parents and children from fourth grade through high school, chose as one of their favorite stars Janet Gaynor, 17% mentioned Charles Farrell. Other stars mentioned by 10% or less of the family audience were in order of frequency Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, Buck Jones, Harold Lloyd, Marie Dressler, Sylvia Sydney, Tom Mix, Will Rogers, Gary Cooper and Norma Shearer.

Some of the parents replied with indignation, others with regret that they could not help us with the problem. 52 gave us constructive material, ten returned the questionnaires accompanied by statements such as these: From the Professor of Child Development and Parent Education in one of our largest universities, "I attend so few during the year that I am really not inform-

ed about them. My only son likewise attends infrequently so I cannot even express his evaluation of pictures at large." Another from the wife of a professor at Yale University, "the truth is we never go to the movies and I know very few people who do. I have almost never seen a picture I thought worthwhile. I do remember having seen *The Covered Wagon* years ago and thinking at the time it was very well done." These are typical of the replies from Euthenics Institute alumnae. Now, *why aren't these people going to the movies?* Because on the whole they do not find them "a satisfying form of entertainment for people with cultural opportunities." Why don't they let their children go? Because "we feel that the movies are so uncontrolled that we do not care to have the children form an appetite for them."

Never-the-less, 772 children from the 4th grade through high school were interested enough to wish to register their likes and dislikes. We learned from our questionnaire that 17% of these children always attend the movies with their parents, that 40% occasionally attend with their parents and 43% never go with adults. We learned that they and their parents who were sufficiently interested to fill in the questionnaire wish in order of frequency comedies, westerns, mysteries, romance, adventure, aviation and drama.

However, when they make statements as to why they like certain pictures the reasons are expressed in terms of humor, mystery, good acting, portrayal of true life, exciting, educational, instructive, thrilling, favorite stars played, history, photography, good morals and clean, in the order just given. Many say they like the picture because it is different and interesting. The indications are that these words are used most frequently in describing family audience pictures.

Children below the high school level show a distinct preference for western pictures, the vote being 49% in elementary grades and 41% in junior high. However in high school the first choice is comedy with girls

registering 32% and the boys 39%, mysteries are second choice. College students prefer comedies, mysteries rate second, with a large vote for educational pictures as third choice. Parents rate comedies first and westerns second. The true family audience, with children from 4th grade through high school and parents, prefers comedies first with a vote of 32%, westerns second 28% and mystery third 23%.

As a parent I ask for motion pictures which will offset some of the effects of our over-stimulating civilization. Their cultural value should be enhanced that our children may have a deeper, better understanding of the arts. We enjoy best those arts which we understand. Educators of the progressive school urge us to encourage self-expression in various media. We cannot all be artists or succeed in even a small measure toward satisfaction in all the arts but we can gain an understanding which will increase the joy of our leisure hours.

I believe the screen might do for pictorial art what the radio is doing for music. We need a Damrosch of Art in the movies for the children of America. I have heard of a room full of children being thrilled by a movie of beautiful gardens in color. From the sixth year on children and adults are intrigued by color. Art appreciation and interpretation develops more slowly than music appreciation or the ability to play a musical instrument. We have prodigies in music as young as the sixth year while seldom do we hear of an artist of note younger than eighteen.

Two years ago my own children, then aged nine and twelve, were very much interested in some beautifully cut silhouettes which had been sent to their teacher from Germany. They had a happy time cutting some of their own for Christmas cards. During the vacation they came to Baltimore at a time when the Little Theater was showing a motion picture in black and white depicting an Arabian Nights story. Recently we were discussing pictures which we had enjoyed the most and that one was men-

tioned with great enthusiasm. During the same vacation we visited an art museum and saw an unusual collection of water colors of single stems of flowers, leaves and grasses and the wee bugs which live on them. It was suggested that a movie of these beautiful motifs might be very fantastic like a delightful dream which leaves one with a feeling of regret that it is ended.

At the time I was asked to make this study of parents' wishes I was reading "The Democratic Philosophy of Education" by Doctor Herman Horn, who had recently given a lecture in Oneonta. I wish to give some of the theories of his educational philosophy. I quote: "The work of education is constructive not critical. Education needs to build up new experiences into intellectual habits. Everything should be as correct as possible from the start. Children grow not by being impressed by physical objects but by trying to use them. Experience is not passive reception; it is active initiation; it is instinctive and impulsive activities; it is inter-action with things." Our children will react in some manner to that which is portrayed for them. The thing seen will motivate them to emulate manners, dress, speech; it will permeate their ideas and ideals which will lead to habitual reaction to people and life situations.

Using the experience with the silhouettes as an example I wish to elaborate. The children were given something beautiful, black and white cut out pictures depicting things of interest to them, scenes from nature, birds, flowers, animals and dancing children. To enjoy them in a passive way was not enough. They wished to do something with the new idea and medium of expression. Christmas time was approaching and the need was felt for Christmas cards. The stimulus to response came from something beautiful, the result was something satisfying because they had achieved, they by their own efforts had created something and their effort was rewarded by adult appreciation.

It so happened that it was possible for the parents to introduce a new medium used in

depicting silhouettes. When a short time later something arrestingly beautiful was seen they had the desire, not only to use the medium available, water colors and paper, but they had developed a sense of artistic appreciation which involves feeling and so imagination was stimulated. The child had the desire to see the beautiful flowers, leaves, grasses and bugs given life on the screen as the silhouettes had acted for them. The action was suggested by the picture of a stem of bleeding heart on which the ant, as shepherdess, was driving the avis cows home to be milked. A biological truth was learned from this picture, insight into the life of nature about us was given, and the desire to know more and do something with the knowledge was stimulated.

A motion picture entitled *Do You Know Beans*, has never been forgotten by one parent. It is a slow motion picture of beans germinating. This parent cited it as one of the most beautiful he had ever seen which proves my contention that such artistically portrayed pictures can be of utmost interest and delight to the adult as well as the child.

Quoting Doctor Horn again, "We are active when we do something to our environment; we are passive when our environment does something to us. What is done to us is probably as significant as what we do. We may note the importance of sensory activity for its own sake, apart from the use to which the things sensed are put. When a sensory experience develops pleasure in itself, apart from the uses of the object sensed, we have one form of aesthetic enjoyment. Such sensory experiences do not lead on to further activity, they are worth while on their own account." As a parent I plea for more sensory experiences having aesthetic value which child and adult may enjoy together.

By this I do not ask for the obviously educational picture; the entertainment feature need not be omitted. It is a question whether it should ever be omitted. It is a great stimulus to interest and where there is interest there is greater learning. However

the Einstein Theory has been given on the screen in an interesting way and the entertainment element was omitted.

A mother of nine children writes: "The most outstanding example of a good picture in my recent experience is *Alexander Hamilton*. After seeing it I urged every child in my family of movie age, to see it. The ideals of this picture were wholesome, entertaining and clean. The costumes were beautiful and the whole picture stately and dignified." We note that parents refer to this picture not alone for its historical value which is appreciated, but for entertainment, artistry and dignity.

There are so many worth while and interesting things to know and think about that I do not wish to spend my time or encourage my children in wasting theirs on the picture of no value. By this I do not mean that we never wish to be amused in a very passive sort of way. A ridiculously funny picture is often better than a tonic for overwrought nerves and a good laugh has relieved many a tension. Recently during a tense moment a member of my family mimicked Zasu Pitts and said emphasizing her remarks with floppy hands, "Ah, Zasu do bring a laugh into the situation" and every one smiled. Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Marie Dressler, Polly Moran and Will Rogers are mentioned by both adult and child. The animated cartoons, Silly Symphonies and short comedies, eliminating the slapsticks which have no value, are gratefully acknowledged. Life is very serious, too serious for the average American. We know very little about how to play as Europeans do with their families. It is good for our mental equilibrium to lose ourselves in pure enjoyment of a good laugh at some one who can depict the humor in every day situations.

Generally speaking parents ask that the programs give us all something to think about, something that leads us along a little farther on our educational journey. These need not be of great value or stress a moral but should not be valueless. My grandmother loved to travel and I shall never for-

get her joy at being able to take us to stereopticon views of places she had visited and others she had only read and dreamed about. I wish I might see her take her great-grandchildren to moving pictures of the Niagara Falls, so near her childhood home and the Victoria Falls in Africa which she could never see. It would be a real experience for them all. One of my friends was thrilled when she could take her son to Niagara but on arriving was surprised to hear him say, "Yes, they look just as they do in the movies."

The world is indeed a small place today and we ask for our children more opportunities to see far places and strange people. Such a picture as *Nanook of the North* both grandmother and the children would have enjoyed. It was beautifully photographed and full of human interest. What child or adult, after seeing it, would forget the picture of the Eskimo mother giving her baby a bath by breathing on its back and rubbing it with a soft piece of skin? We wish our children to become acquainted with social, economic and personal problems of various peoples. Is there a better way to promote the desired understanding and international interest?

Our research brought to light a protest against the gangster pictures. Surely children must have love, understanding and a feeling of security in the home and in the community if they are to develop into well-balanced mature personalities. Pictures of mystery, crime and violence, which many of them need never meet in real life, are disturbing, it is true. Parents complain that such a scene holds the intense interest of the child but that they do not leave it at the picture house. They take it home. The subconscious mind does not let it go.

Fears are sometimes established by the harrowing movies and borderline maladjusted children are given a shock which forces them into a psychoneurosis which might have been avoided.

The adult usually attends the thrilling, exciting horror pictures to satisfy some emo-

tional need. He may have an unrecognized sadistic tendency. He may never give vent to this tendency except in an occasional tongue lashing but he can in imagination go into a perfect orgy of terror and keep his self-respect while attending the movie. Such a personality is indicated by the choice of one professional man who mentioned five of this type out of eight pictures he had enjoyed the most. Those mentioned were *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, *The Island of Lost Souls*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Should we feed children's minds on these horror pictures which may either intimidate the personality or aid in building up enjoyment of or, at least, resistance to the recognition of cruelty, brutality and third degree methods often used in creating these thrillers. One high school girl stated on her paper under reason for liking *I am a Fugitive from the Chain Gang*: "It is starkly sadistic and shows true life in a chain gang."

Dr. Frederick L. Patry, neuro-psychiatrist, New York State Department of Education inclosed with his questionnaire a message of encouragement and these statements in his letter: "There is no doubt that children as well as adults would enjoy a larger measure of individual and social health if they were saved unwholesome excitement and pernicious psychological effects of certain pictures which are thrust upon a passive type of visual and auditory enjoyment. Although I am not a very frequent devotee of movie houses I on occasion enjoy newsreels, educational films, particularly those relating to other countries, as well as comic and romantic films. I feel that all of these types have decided constructive potentialities which ought to be cultivated to the full, at the same time protecting the emotional and volitional immature segment of our movie-going population from unnecessary and socially unwholesome types of pictures, particularly those glorifying the lives of criminals, and to some extent pictures making light of time-proven sex ethics."

So for the adult and the child we plead

for the beautiful, the joyful, the wholesome and sane. The educators and librarians are back of us in our whole-hearted appeal to those at the seat of production for artistry combined with inspiration. We want entertainment for our children which will help them to gain a philosophy of life which will give them joy in "the harmonious expression of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth and happiness of human nature."

The mothers in Oneonta asked me to express appreciation to the National Board of Review for the care of its members in the selection of pictures for junior matinees. Intelligent conscientious parents select very carefully the feature picture for their children but must have them miss the fun of the cartoons, the interest and value of the newsreel and the travelogue because they cannot risk what the short ill-chosen comedy or the previews of coming attractions might do to the personality in the making. Those with young children wait until time for the feature picture to be shown.

However the problem for me was not the choice of junior matinee programs but those for the family audience. I believe that sociological pictures for the adolescent and adult if shown should be a true portrayal of the conditions. Anita Block in her address "The Theatre as a Criticism of Life" said: "The fact that the common man on the street identifies himself with the character in the play as completely as the man of culture makes the theatre the most universal of all arts, and puts upon it great responsibility for social evolution; that makes it able to function more than music, literature and sculpture or any of the other arts as an active social criticism of life itself." She said, "Let us look at a play like 'The Good Home.' It deals with very simple unimportant people in a fishing village on the coast of Holland whose lives are at the mercy of employers who send laborers to sea in ships that are unseaworthy. One of the most moving and effective of modern plays it had an actual, tangible result, in that legislation

in Holland was passed which provided that no fishing vessel could go out until it was inspected and pronounced seaworthy. In other words, the power of the boat master over life and death for his men has gone and the state stepped in to protect the workers."

Carlyle wrote that the best educated man is the one who has touched life in the most places. Do not be afraid of allowing young people to view life situations honestly portrayed. We adults, however, should recognize our responsibility and not over stress the artificiality and uncertainty of contemporary life. At a time when every fifth marriage goes on the rocks of the divorce court it is necessary that we give our children some honest pictures of satisfying family life with only a sprinkling of the problems.

One mother who is successfully making a very difficult adjustment said: "The motion pictures could be a better means than literature of teaching our young people that adult life brings different joys and satisfactions if we could show them that the joys of life are not all brought by romance, song and dance, but that recognizing and honestly meeting adult responsibilities brings a far deeper satisfaction. Perhaps these things are too subtle to portray but I believe the motion picture goes to extremes. It portrays the old fashioned sentiment which aids in the shock to the young person asked to face reality in making marriage adjustments or it depicts the opposite modern version which makes the young person cynical, expecting and looking for the flaw in each human relationship."

Many times I have heard Dr. Esther Loring Richards at Johns Hopkins University ask social workers to see that a maladjusted adolescent have the opportunity to attend the movies for identification outlet. We all have to make choices. What things have human value? What things give the greatest satisfaction to the individual and aid in the progress of society? The adolescents are asking these questions. They know that as adults they must choose. The movie can be of inestimable value in aiding our young people

to know something of the problems they must face in work, love and play. Adults must face the responsibility by not warping their ideas and ideals by artificiality, superficiality and extravagance labeled "true life situations." Of the youth in junior high school and high school 17% gave as a reason for liking a picture "it was true to life." Adolescents are looking to the movies to tell them what the life of the adult is really like.

Parents are asking for artistry, culture, for amusement and entertainment. They wish for programs which give a vicarious experience in romance, geography and history. To these they add those which convey technical information concerning the principles of biology and sociology. All may be given in an entertaining manner and so raise the level of our people in ideals, culture, citizenship knowledge and understanding.

The children also find most intrinsic value in the drama. 3% of those answering the questionnaire remembered *Daddy Long Legs* shown two years ago and 70% of those mentioning it would like to see it again. *Sunny Side Up* was shown four years ago yet 5% remembered to note it and 50% of these would like to see it again. *Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm*, shown more recently, was voted by 6% and 54% of these would like to see it again. It is true that *Movie Crazy* and *Prosperity* had the largest vote of favoritism but a smaller number would like to see them again. They were amusing for the moment but had no permanent message for the young people seeing them. That our children recognize that which is of greatest value according to the standards of trained reviewers is the most hopeful trend found in our study.

No one doubts the fact that the movies have a very great influence on the life of our communities. The movie house is the great private school of the American child, and his parents can by standing together have something to say concerning its teachings. The individual pays for what he gets—if the entertainment is not pleasing the individual

parent should rouse himself to demand better and then make the best a paying proposition when it is given to him.

The industry complains that the best brings but meager returns to the producer and the exhibitor. When social conditions do not please some individuals withdraw; some become too aggressive with little reflection on the possible by-products of their activity. Dr. Horn suggests a remedy for the ordinary morality of the day which is a compromise between the two. "Let individuals be occupied in progressive cumulative undertakings engaging their reflection." I plea that parents reflect, meet with interest their obligation and take part in the choice of family audience programs."

More and more adults will be searching for satisfying leisure time pursuits. May they not be lethargic in their attitude toward cinema entertainment but progressive, demand the best and support it for their own enjoyment and the mental health and stability of their young people. Every parent wishes for his child greater happiness in human relationships, greater satisfaction in work, play and worship. We have a new tool for human progress and we are learning its great value.

Writing for the Films

By L'Estrange Fawcett

THIS little book, written by an Englishman who seems thoroughly acquainted with studio conditions here as well as in his own country, will be found practical and useful for people who want to write for the screen. Mr. Fawcett feels an honest and justifiable indignation against the subjection of writers to studio officials, and a militant belief in the value of good stories. His analysis of scenario making should be helpful to the aspiring amateur.

Isaac Pitman Sons, Publishers. Price, \$1.00.

Have you secured a copy of the Eighteenth Annual Selected Pictures Catalog, compiled by the National Board?

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BLONDIE JOHNSON—Screen story by Earl Baldwin, directed by Ray Enright, with a cast headed by Joan Blondell. First National, 6 reels. Story of a girl who, after her family has been the victim of a terrible injustice, becomes hard-boiled and goes into the racket of "doing" people. Her rewards are not up to expectations. Miss Blondell gives a warmer and more human performance than usual. *Mature audience.*

BROADWAY BAD—Screen story by William R. Lipman, directed by Sidney Lanfield, with a cast including Joan Blondell, Ginger Rogers and Ricardo Cortez. Fox, 6 reels. The story of a Follies girl and her greed for her small son—when threatened with losing him she stops at nothing to keep him. *Mature audience.*

***CHARLOTTE LOWENSKOLD** — From the novel by Selma Lagerlof, directed by Gustaf Molander, with a cast including Birgit Sergelius and Eric Barclay. Scandinavian, 8 reels. A beautiful production of part of Selma Lagerlof's trilogy dealing with a young preacher's struggle between his calling, his love and jealousy and his loyalty to his mother. Unusually human. Mostly silent (with music) and Swedish subtitles—a little dialogue and singing but not hard to follow. Worth being kept permanently available. *Family audience.*

***CLEAR ALL WIRES**—From the play by Bella and Samuel Soewack, directed by George Hill, with a cast including Lee Tracy, Benita Hume and Una Merkel. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. A laugh-filled comedy of a high-powered American correspondent who creates front page news when he cannot find it, and his hilarious adventures in Soviet Russia. Fast moving and genuinely amusing. *Family audience.*

THE CONSTANT WOMAN—From the play "Recklessness" by Eugene O'Neill, directed by Victor Schertzinger, with a cast including Leila Hyams and Conrad Nagel. World Wide, 6 reels. Interesting picture well-directed and acted about a man who owns a road show and his difficulties after the death of his wife when he is left with a small son. *Mature audience.*

THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY—From the novel "The Grootman Case" by Walter Espe, directed by William Beaudine, with a cast including Jean Hersholt, Stuart Erwin, Wynne Gibson and Frances Dee. Paramount, 8 reels. Very cleverly handled murder mystery which gives little inkling to the true murderer. Jean Hersholt as the German doctor and Stuart Erwin as a reporter are both excellent, as is the entire cast. *Family audience.*

FORGOTTEN—Screen story by Harry Sauber, directed by Richard Thorpe, with a cast headed by Lee Kohlmar. Invincible, 7 reels. A good old-fashioned story with good old-fashioned acting by the star who plays a wealthy old man whose life is almost ruined by two mercenary sons. Full of homely humor and the teaching of good morals for those who like this type of picture. *Family audience.*

42ND STREET—From the novel by Bradford Ropes, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with a cast including Bebe Daniels, Ruby Keeler, Warner Baxter and George Brent. Warner, 8 reels. The familiar story of a chorus girl who steps in and by saving the show becomes the star, but given new life by an excellent cast and lively direction. The show within the picture is full of novelty. *Family audience.*

FROM HELL TO HEAVEN—From the play by Lawrence Hazard, directed by Earle C. Kenton, with a cast including Carole Lombard and Jack Oakie. Paramount, 7 reels. An entertaining picture which has nothing to do with the title. A hotel which caters to the race track crowds is the scene of comedy, tragedy, love, broken hearts and lost fortunes. Jack Oakie as a poor broadcaster and a worse song writer supplies the comedy. *Mature audience.*

***THE GREAT JASPER**—From the novel by Fulton Oursler, directed by J. Walter Ruben, with a cast headed by Richard Dix. RKO, 9 reels. Domestic drama replete with interesting

personalities which concerns the career of a romantic, happy-go-lucky Irishman who starts out as a horse-car driver and some twenty years later is the famous fortune-teller of Atlantic City. Mr. Dix gives an excellent performance in the title role and is ably assisted by the entire cast. *Family audience.*

***ICH WILL NICHT WISSEN WER DU BIST** (Don't Tell Me Who You Are)—Screen story by Walter Reich and Fritz Schulz, directed by Geza von Bolvary, with a cast including Gustav Frölich and Liane Haid. *Interworld*, 9 reels. A delightful entertainment by the makers of *Two Hearts in Waltz Time*, a humorous romance of a count hiring out as a chauffeur. All the cast are excellent and there is some charming music. *Family audience.*

INFERNAL MACHINE—From the novel by Carl Sloboda, directed by Marcel Varnel, with a cast including Chester Morris and Genevieve Tobin. *Fox*, 6 reels. Entertaining and amusing treatment of the situation of how a number of people on an ocean liner behave when they learn that a bomb, hidden in the ship, will explode in a few hours. *Family audience.*

***KING KONG**—Derived from an idea of Edgar Wallace and Meriam C. Cooper, directed by Meriam C. Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, with a cast including Robert Armstrong, Fay Wray and Bruce Cabot. *RKO*, 11 reels. A fantastic picture about a movie director who goes to an unknown island to make the biggest picture of the year. Mystery surrounds the island and only after the young girl of the company has been kidnaped by the natives do they discover the terrible mystery. They do not get the picture but—what do they bring back? *Mature audience.*

***KING OF THE JUNGLE**—Screen story by Charles Stoneham, directed by H. Bruce Humpherson and Max Marcin, with a cast including Buster Crabbe and Frances Dee. *Paramount*, 8 reels. Entertaining and fantastic picture of a boy who is brought up in the jungle with the lions, and his marvelous influence over wild beasts. He is captured with the lions and brought to America for a circus act. There are some interesting fights between animals. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

A LADY'S PROFESSION—From a story by Nina Wilcox Putnam, directed by Norman McLeod, with a cast including Alison Skipworth and Roland Young. *Paramount*, 7 reels. An amusing light story of a titled English family who, having to recoup their fortune, come to America, the land of opportunity and speak-easies. The latter bring them wealth and notoriety and they are glad to sail back to their conservative England. *Mature audience.*

***MEN MUST FIGHT**—From the play by Reginald Lawrence and S. K. Lauren, directed by Edgar Selwyn, with a cast including Diana Wynyard, Phillips Holmes and May Robson. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 8 reels. An unusual picture about a mother who brought her son up as a pacifist after his father had been killed in the war, and his struggle between

patriotism and personal principles when another war comes. Remarkable in its attempt to be fair to all sides, and in its sincerity. *Family audience.*

THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM—Screen story by Charles S. Belden, directed by Michael Curtiz, with a cast including Lionel Atwill, Glenda Farrell and Fay Wray. *Warner*, 7 reels. A wax museum that covers a gruesome mystery, which is ferreted out by a peppery girl reporter. Done in color it is a vivid melodrama with some effective horrors. *Mature audience.*

THE OUTSIDER—From the play by Dorothy Brandon, directed by Harry Lachman, with a cast including John Huth and Joan Barry. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 8 reels. The story of a curer of cripples who is not a doctor with a diploma—an outsider—and his struggle to win professional recognition, which he does by curing the daughter of a great surgeon. Unusual in plot, acted by English actors. *Family audience.*

PERFECT UNDERSTANDING—Screen story by Miles Malleon, directed by Cyril Gardner, with a cast headed by Gloria Swanson. *United Artists*, 7 reels. The story of a marriage that tries to make itself safe by building on perfect understanding, which encounters difficulties but surmounts them by love. Smart scenes in Europe, especially Cannes, and an attractive cast. Its aim is sophistication. *Mature audience.*

THE PHANTOM THUNDERBOLT—Screen story by Forrest Sheldon and Betty Burbridge, directed by Alan James. *World Wide*, 6 reels. Western story about a bad man who is really not a bad man but trading on his reputation he is able to save the town from a band of outlaws. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE RUSTLERS ROUNDUP—Screen story by Ella O'Neill, directed by Harry MacRae, with a cast headed by Tom Mix. *Universal*, 6 reels. Although the story is the usual one about the wicked overseer trying to get possession of the girl's ranch this Western is interestingly told and Tom Mix is always a convincing hero. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SCARLET RIVER—Screen story by Harold Shumate, directed by Otto Brower, with a cast including Tom Keene, Edgar Kennedy and Dorothy Wilson. *RKO*, 6 reels. A movie company, going to make an outdoor picture on a ranch, gives some fresh and often humorous angles to a conventional Western plot. It rather obviously glorifies the American movie actor, with some incidental "good" lessons for boys. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SECRETS—From the play by Rudolf Besier and May Edington, directed by Frank Borzage, with a cast including Mary Pickford and Leslie Howard. *United Artists*, 8 reels. Mary Pickford from girlhood to old age—hoopskirt romance, covered wagon pioneering and modern politics, with an unaccountable spell of unfaithfulness on the part of her husband.

Mary has one of her best parts in a long time.
Family audience.

SILENT MEN—Screen story by *Walt Coburn*, directed by *D. Ross Ledermann*, with a cast headed by *Tim McCoy*. Columbia, 6 reels. Variation of the story of the falsely convicted man out to establish his innocence. Plenty of action, good suspense and some tense scenes. Western locale. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SMOKED LIGHTNING—From the story "Can-
yon Walls" by *Zane Grey*, directed by *David Howard*, with a cast headed by *George O'Brien*. Fox, 6 reels. Western with a little girl and her ranch as the center of the villain's plots. Her self-appointed guardian however protects her. Entertaining throughout with some good comedy touches. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***STATE FAIR**—From the novel by *Phil Stong*, directed by *Henry King*, with a cast including *Will Rogers*, *Janet Gaynor* and *Lew Ayres*. Fox, 9 reels. The story of a family's visit to the state fair, where the parents win long coveted prizes and the son and daughter find romance. A human and entertaining picture of American life, well directed and well acted. *Family audience.*

VIA PONY EXPRESS—Screen story by *Oliver Drake*, directed by *Lew Collins*, with a cast including *Lane Chandler*, *Jack Oakie* and *Marceline Day*. Majestic, 6 reels. Story of the old West and a letter stolen from the Pony Express rider. Decidedly juvenile with its swift riding and superintelligent horse. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WHAT! NO BEER?—Screen story by *Robert E. Hopkins*, directed by *Edward Sedgwick*, with a cast including *Buster Keaton* and *Jimmy Durante*. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 7 reels. A farce, often hilarious, about two men who inadvertently get into the business of making real beer. The funniest of the Keaton-Durante comedies. Its ending is frank propaganda of the "beer for prosperity" kind. *Family audience.*

WHEN A MAN RIDES ALONE—Screen story by *F. McGrew Willis*, directed by *J. P. McGowan*, with a cast headed by *Tom Tyler*. Freuler, 5 reels. A Robin Hood Westerner who sets things right among people wronged by an unscrupulous mine-owner. Full of action—not quite in the rut with other Westerns. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Der Hauptmann von Koeppenick

Family audience. (see page 11)

M

Mature audience. (see page 8)

Topaze

Family audience. (see page 7)

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INFORMATIONALS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

AGGRAVATIN' BEAR (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
BERLIN MEDLEY (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. *Family audience.*
CUBA, THE LAND OF THE RHUMBA (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
DOWN FROM VESUVIUS (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. *Family audience.*
HOLLAND MOSAICS (Vagabond Adventures)—RKO. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 9—Paramount. *Family audience.*
HOT AND COLD THRILLS (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Paramount. *Family audience.*
***KRAKATOA**—Volcanoes. Suggested for schools and libraries. Educational, 3 rls. *Family audience.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 9—Paramount. *Family audience.*
PARIS ON PARADE (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. *Family audience.*
PATHE REVIEW NO. 4—RKO. *Family audience.*
RHAPSODY OF THE RAILS (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox. *Family audience.*
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 8—Columbia. *Family audience.*
SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 9—Paramount. *Family audience.*
SKIPPING AROUND THE UNIVERSE (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational. *Family audience.*
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 27—Universal. *Family audience.*
TAKING THE CURE (Magic Carpet Series)—Monsummano, Lido, etc. Fox. *Family audience.*
TWO HUNDRED FATHOMS DEEP (Camera Adventures)—Educational. *Family audience.*
***WOODLAND PAIS** (Naturgraphs)—Taming birds. Suggested for schools and libraries. Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

AFRICA SPEAKS ENGLISH—Edgar Bergen. Vitaphone, 1 rl. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
ART IN THE RAW—Edgar Kennedy. RKO, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
BROADWAY GOSSIP NOS. 3-4—Columnist Newsreel Reporter. Educational, 1 rl. *Family audience.*
CALIENTE LOVE—Joyce Compton, Eddie Nugent. Paramount, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
CLANCY OF THE MOUNTED NOS. 4-10 (serial)—Tom Tyler. Universal, 2 rls. each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
FORGOTTEN BABIES—Our Gang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
HOW'S TRICKS—Vaudeville. Vitaphone, 1 rl. *Family audience.*
THE MERCHANT OF MENACE—Edgar Kennedy. RKO, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
NATURE IN THE WRONG—Charley Chase. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
THE RADIO MURDER MYSTERY—Universal. 2 rls. *Family audience.*
SING BING SING—Bing Crosby. Paramount, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
THROUGH THIN AND THICKET OR WHO'S ZOO IN AFRICA—The Masquers. RKO, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
THE VAGABOND—Charlie Chaplin comedy synchronized. RKO, 2 rls. *Family audience.*
WHISPERIN' BILL—Recitation of Irving Bachelor's war poem by Chic Sales. Effective for many people as anti-war propaganda. *Family audience.*
THE WHISPERING SHADOW NOS. 6-12 (serial)—Bela Lugosi. Mascot, 2 rls. each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THE WORLD'S CHAMP—Jack Dempsey. Vitaphone, 2 rls. *Family audience.*

CARTOONS

(1 reel each)

BETTY BOOP'S PENTHOUSE (Talkartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THE LAST MAIL (Aesop Fable)—RKO. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
LOVE'S LABOR WON (Aesop Fable)—RKO. *Family audience.*
PANICKY PUP (Aesop Fable)—RKO. *Family audience.*
POPULAR MELODIES (Talkartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience.*
SASSY CATS (Scrappy)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
SCRAPPY'S PARTY (Scrappy)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THT SHRIEK (Lucky Rabbit)—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
SNOW WHITE (Talkartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THE TALE OF A SHIRT (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience.*
WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN? (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

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To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VIII, No. 4

April, 1933



The unknown, the German and the Frenchman in "Hell on Earth"
(see page 8)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through cooperation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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April, 1933

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Motion Pictures and Children's Emotions

By DR. FRANK ASTOR

Dr. Astor, who is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review, is well qualified to discuss the subject of youth's reactions. He has had a long teaching career which began in 1912 after study at the University of Virginia, Johns Hopkins and Columbia. Since 1926 he has acted as Field Director of the National Child Welfare Association. His latest activity undertaken early this year is with the Child Guidance Bureau of the Board of Education of New York City. He has directed the radio program for the National Child Welfare Association, has written several books and many articles on education and has lectured widely on the subject. The article below is his address delivered on the program of the recent Annual Conference of the National Board.

A recent bit of news taken from the daily papers and announced over the radio told of a restaurant owner who invited eight needy boys to dinner. His chef was very famous, and so he was surprised to find that one of the boys would not eat. He said to the youngster, "Why, Buddy, what's the matter?" The boy answered frankly and finally, "I don't like your cook." A good many people who deal with children have found that it is not always easy to foresee just what children will like or dislike.

It was partly with the children in mind that the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was founded by the People's Institute in 1909. It is only recently, however, that the youngsters have been asked to give their reactions to pictures. Last year and the year before that the National Board

of Review experimented with the idea of bringing young folks into projection rooms with the adults. The idea seemed to work so well that the Executive Committee of the National Board thought the time was ripe this fall to let the younger people have a discussion club of their own.

Several months ago the Young Reviewers' Club was organized, with a president, a secretary and an executive committee. This is the official young people's group of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures.

Since early in the fall these children, ranging from nine to nineteen years of age, have been going to the projection rooms and expressing their opinions on pictures. The club has grown so rapidly it fills two projection rooms, with hundreds of children uninvited and awaiting their turn. There are children from more than fifty different organizations and they represent a wide social and geographical distribution. They come from all five boroughs of Greater New York; from Mt. Kisco, N. Y., from Rutherford, Jersey City, and Newark in New Jersey and other nearby places. Some come from well-known private schools, many from the typical elementary and high schools and some from schools in gangster sections. The membership includes children who are semi-blind and children who are deaf and must

enjoy the pictures by reading the lips of the speakers. If the actor turns his back to the audience these deaf children can not "hear" what he says. We did not think the semi-blind children would enjoy the picture, but after one visit the three who came wrote us a letter with a typewriter which had type much bigger than the capitals of the average typewriter. All three of the boys signed the letter, which said they had enjoyed the meeting, and were eager to be invited again.

In organizing this club, we have made an effort to develop as many leaders as possible, as many leaders of discussion as possible, and to remove all obstacles to freedom of discussion. As time goes on, it seems that the boys and girls are getting rid of self-consciousness and are becoming more and more frank in their comments.

The interest shown by the boys and girls has grown beyond all expectations. We are constantly getting word from some boy or girl or their parents as to their desire to be re-invited to our meetings. One high school boy wrote a long letter which ended as follows:

"Were I not very much interested in the work of the Young Reviewers' Club, I would not take the liberty to write to you. But when I read of it being organized I had a secret ambition to become a member. I felt overjoyed at my appointment. Because I do not want it to fade from reality to a dream again, I am writing you asking to be called to the meetings."

Since it is said that more than twenty-three million boys and girls under twenty-one years of age see motion pictures each week, a group like this may be able to help us get some idea of possible reactions of children all over the United States; it may help to raise the level of taste, especially if the movement continues to spread; it may help these boys and girls to achieve what some call an "emotional detachment," so that they will not take the picture too seriously, and will realize that the screen often depicts a world of unreality. If parents go with children who seem frightened at a cer-

tain scene they can point out that the episode is not true to life. The parents of the Young Reviewers' Club may not find this necessary because the frank discussion itself probably tears away the disguise from unreality. We hope also by means of this discussion group to discourage the temptation to foolish imitation of the actors and actresses, and to soften the tendency of some boys and girls to be discouraged with their own lot after seeing the splendors of the screen. They can eventually learn that when they walk out of a theatre they can shed the spirit of the cinema, as does the girl who has read the story of Cinderella; she knows she must not be dissatisfied if after reading this story no prince comes with a silver slipper.

A mother of one of the girls wrote a letter in which she told of this incident: Since taking part in the discussions of the Young Reviewers' Club the daughter saw one of the mystery thrillers. When she arrived home she said something like this: "I don't feel the same when I go to the movies as I used to. At various times in this picture they showed scenes which would formerly have been horrifying. But each time such a scene appeared I said to myself, 'Oh, that was just put in to give us the shivers; it is not at all necessary to the story'."

Children will often surprise us. Here is a little girl who loves animals. On her walks she will invariably stop to pet a dog or a cat. She takes care of all the pets in her home; the canary, when let out of its cage, often hops on this girl's head. This lover of animals came to a club meeting and saw a picture with a number of incidents and items, under the title *Strange As It Seems*. When asked by the president what she thought of the picture, she said, "I liked it, especially where the man shot the animal."

In discussing one picture, *Second-Hand Wife*, different ones made comments like these: a boy said: "They expressed love merely by showing embraces. It was overdone. If they tried to show love in a differ-

ent fashion, it would have been more effective." A girl answers: "Might I ask what other ways there are?"

Another boy a little later said, "The picture was too much concerned about bodily love. They should have shown spiritual love." Then another girl asked, "What is spiritual love?" Then a different boy spoke up and said, "They just embraced each other. They should have loved more from the mind than from the body."

The president asked whether the picture was instructional and got four answers in the following order: "It teaches self-sacrifice for those you love." "It is instructional for older ladies because it teaches that they shouldn't make their children work too much." "I think it only teaches people how to make love." "Nothing teaches people how to make love. It comes naturally." These answers were given by four boys.

Other comments on the same picture were: from a nine-year old boy: "There was too much love." Another boy: "Children like action pictures—something with pep and vigor." Another boy: "In the scene where the girl opened the flowers and she dropped the telegram about the girl making money for them, it would have been more exciting if she had dropped the telegram and the other girl had found it." Here was a suggestion to the scenario writer for improving the plot.

Another member said: "Most of the pictures on the screen are written by playwrights and there is not an ounce of truth in them."

Another member: "Most people say 'It only happens in the pictures.' The motion picture people should make things more true to life. If they look into the average family, they will find beauty and entertainment and tragedy."

The club saw a picture, *Nagana*, which, among a wealth of incidents, showed how a Japanese doctor sacrificed his life to science. The discussion leader asked: "What did you think of the Japanese doctor?" A girl said,

"I think he was the best in the picture. He stole the scenes. When he died, things in the picture died."

Another picture, *Handle With Care*, had two boys in fairly important parts. The discussion included these opinions:

A boy, "It was exciting. When all those children were racing to see the robbers, you thought they would never get there." A girl: "I thought it was very interesting. I liked the way the children became loyal to the man."

A girl: "I thought the girl was terrible. She had no personality—she just smiled and raised her eyebrows."

A boy: "Why did they have bottles of liquor in a district attorney's home?"

Here are some comments from still another picture, *Robber's Roost*.

A member said, "The picture was run too fast. You couldn't make out what happened. When the girl fell from the horse, I couldn't see anything until she reached the ground."

A member: "Suppose you read a book like the Rover Boys, which is considered trash—if you read a good book it stays with you, and why can't a picture do the same thing?"

A member: "The art of making a really good picture is the art of making the instructional part combine so well with the entertainment that you don't notice it." Another member: "It wouldn't be a good box-office picture if it isn't entertaining."

Another: "Take the older folks. A person after working all day wants to see something that takes him to another world. They want pictures which will take their minds off their work."

According to the figures given by McCall's Magazine in explaining the studies sponsored by the Payne Fund, approximately one-third of the total attendance at the moving pictures consists of children under twenty-one. Then approximately two-thirds are adults. Since the movies are here to stay, any improvement in them will probably come through improved public taste or the deliberate decision on the part of the public

to pay for better and better pictures and to refuse to pay for the undesirable ones.

It is the duty of those who support the pictures and those who express opinions on them to learn more and more about the child and his emotions. Besides keeping in touch with such published studies, we must keep an eye on child psychology.

An important concept which we should constantly keep in mind is one called *conditioning*. Many psychologists feel that this concept is one of the most important contributions ever made to the science of human understanding. Lack of time prevents my going into this fully and so I will just touch it lightly. Mr. and Mrs. Blank had recently put in a new floor lamp. Little Mary was near it when she heard a scream. Immediately the fear caused by the scream became associated with the strange lamp. She would not go near the lamp; when she had to pass it, she kept close to the opposite wall. Knowing the danger of such fears, the parents held a council and determined to make a pleasant association between the child and the lamp. This they succeeded in doing very easily, by attaching to it a long, highly-colored beaded string. The child was "re-conditioned" and often played with the string, thereby turning the light on and off.

How does conditioning apply to the motion pictures? In at least two general ways: First, the spread of fear.

A group of scientific psychologists feel that children come into the world with only two fears: the fear of falling and the fear of a loud noise. Then how do they later get so many other fears, such as the fear of animals and the fear of the dark? Their answer is: by conditioning. On this basis, we must watch the movies carefully to avoid the spread of too many fears; for by the process of conditioning fears can spread faster than an epidemic. This gives us one of the gravest dangers of the motion pictures. The whole problem is one which needs thorough consideration and extreme watchfulness.

The second way that conditioning is related to the movies can be illustrated by the work of Dr. L. L. Thurstone. He showed a group of school children a moving picture which depicted Germans in a friendly light. He tested the attitudes of the children toward people of that nation before and after the picture. He found that the picture made the children more friendly toward the Germans.

In similar fashion the movies can easily build up favorable or unfavorable impressions toward the people of any land, toward any group in our own country, toward policemen, firemen, or school teachers. It becomes a powerful weapon for peace or war. Our modern schools are trying to teach children that the policeman is a helper of society, is a friend of children; but if the boys and girls see many pictures showing policemen as bullies and men of punishment, a great deal of the work of the teachers will be undone.

Because of conditioning, and other reasons there are grave dangers in our movies, even though they have unlimited possibilities for good. The movies are like dynamite; a mighty force for construction or destruction.

There may be grave danger in arousing strong emotions in children without giving them an opportunity for the expression of these emotions. If a child is badly frightened, takes the picture seriously, and the fear is repressed, it may not only make him nervous now, but it may bob up again at some future time to give him trouble.

A very intelligent boy, who was valedictorian in his class, saw a movie in which a phantom took a part. He later asked his father if the phantom really existed in life.

Here are some ways of avoiding this danger:

1. Public opinion can assert itself against the too fearful, or excessively emotional picture, if it feels they are harmful to too many children.
2. Refuse to let the children go to that type, and have special pictures for children.

3. Make sure by discussion before and after or by comments during the picture that the children know the difference between real life and the imaginary life of the screen. A certain professor realized that his little boy did not make this distinction and told as true many things which were only imaginary. He did not call the boy a "story teller," but said, "Whenever you want to tell me anything like that, which is not really so in life, just wink." The boy kept up his imaginings but very often winked. It is important that children know when it is winking time. As I have pointed out, this is one of the advantages of the Young Reviewers' Club, which shows up the unreality of pictures.

4. Stirring pictures had best not be seen by children just before bed time. There should be time after the picture for them to run and play. Fear and anger represent the way used by nature ages ago for man to run for his life or fight for his life. Back in the cave-man days, the human body had to generate energy and act quickly. If our progenitor suddenly saw a tiger, he could not go to his study and think over what action to take. His actions were automatic; and that is probably the reason he lived to tell the tale. Nature still supplies our children with approximately the same equipment this cave man received; and that probably explains a child's fondness for emotional stirrings, and his willingness to stay and see a picture the second time. As soon as the picture is over, then, it is better for the child to use up this excess of energy supplied by nature. There is danger in being kept quiet under these circumstances.

What are some of the advantages of moving pictures?

1. The most clear-cut and definite one is: relief from the strains and tensions of life. Progressive educators are constantly trying to get teachers and parents to encourage good humor, smiles and laughter because of their medicinal value. We do not have to urge this on those who produce pictures.

Like the Cinderella story, the screen may sometimes make us millionaires for a quarter, and give us courage to go out and face the battles of life.

2. Just as the radio can in the long run raise the general taste for music, the screen has as one of its possibilities, the raising of the general taste for motion pictures.

3. Very few people realize it, but there is a possibility that movies can help the field of eugenics, and that consciously or otherwise each star sets a sort of standard or ideal by which boys and girls select their life mates. Of course this is a disadvantage if the stars themselves do not represent a high standard. This is a reason among others why we must be careful what type of acting and incidents we pay our money to see. The best possible way to censor a picture or an actor is to pay your money to see a better picture or actor.

There may be many other advantages, but there is not time to go into them. In this connection it may be well to keep in mind that nature has one interesting quality; it may seem wasteful at times, but a great deal of its behavior has a purpose—the purpose being to save the individual and the race.

The age of mechanical invention may be said to have reached adolescence or even adulthood, though we can expect the future to bring us many new and surprising inventions.

The age of the study of the child's mind or anybody's mind is still in babyhood; the next few generations may be known in history a thousand years from now as the age of the revelation of human mental possibilities.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* we have the quotation:

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

For present purposes we can change that a little and say:

"There are more things in mind and body
Than are dreamt of in many philosophies."

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Hell on Earth

Adapted from Leonhard Frank's story, directed and produced by Victor Trivas, distributed by Aeolian Pictures.

The cast

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| The German | Ernst Busch |
| The Frenchman | Georges Pecllet |
| The Jew | Wladimir Sokoloff |
| The Englishman | Hugh Douglas |
| The Negro | Louis Douglas |

IT has taken nearly fifteen years for the international film of the Great War to emerge, the film of the ordinary fighting men of all the armies, and it comes from Germany—*Niemand'sland*, they called it there, *No Man's Land*. Here it is being called *Hell on Earth*.

The curious thing about war pictures, even when they set out most deliberately to prove the horror and waste and futility of war, is that they rarely escape putting a certain glamor into it. Whatever beliefs civilization may have arrived at about fighting and killing, particularly the modern ways of it which involve so much of terrific mechanical agents of destruction and so little of the old-time personal heroism, there still remains a thrill almost universally potent in seeing men sacrifice themselves for their country. A film story that rouses enough interest in individual persons to be interesting as a story, is pretty sure, somewhere in its course, if it shows those persons in a war, to show them in situations that excite more admiration and sympathy than horror. Some-

thing deep down in man's obscurest emotional responses makes an exciting war drama much more propaganda for adventure than propaganda for peace. However vehemently a film may argue against destruction, there is usually something in it more positive than argument that is glamorous and thrilling in spite of itself.

Hell on Earth does no arguing at all, and yet it is perhaps the most persuasive film against war that has been made. It takes no stand on what the war was about, who was right or wrong; it makes no point of the futility of it, and puts no special stress on horror and suffering and destruction. It simply shows five men accidentally caught together between the fighting lines in *No Man's Land*—five ordinary soldiers of different nations—and makes you feel the tremendous pity that they should be blindly devoting their lives to destroying one another.

The picture begins—rather lengthily—by glimpses of these men in their homes before the war: an Englishman whose child is just being born; a Jewish tailor just being married; a Frenchman just falling in love; a German carpenter in a happy home with his wife and little boy; a negro vaudeville performer who dances and sings in all the cities of Europe. Then suddenly the war has blotted out this peaceful home life and snatched them into the machinery of fighting. A few quick impressive shots and the scene is in the unutterable

BULLETIN

1933

Exceptional
Cavalcade
Hell on Earth
Ivan
M
Topaze

Honorable Mention
Der Hauptmann von
Koepenick

desolation of No Man's Land, where every man is an enemy

The German and Frenchman find themselves, at the end of a burst of fighting, in a shell-hole, and they take refuge in what must have been part of a trench under a ruined building. There, forgetting for the moment that they are parts of a machine and reverting to their humanness, they rescue a man from under a fallen timber—the Jewish tailor, whose power of speech and hearing has been destroyed by some shock of battle. Then into their shattered shelter comes the negro, dragging the spent British officer.

Life becomes for these five men the simple, desperate problem of keeping alive. And while guns roar across them and gas creeps murderously into their hiding place and the night skies are fitfully aglare with war lights, they get acquainted. The Frenchman, the German and the Englishman know only their own tongues and the tailor cannot speak at all, but the negro whose minstrel life has taken him into all countries has a smattering of all their languages and can make them understood to one another.

This long episode of five men in the wrecked cellar using their homely little expedients for comfort under the close-pressing threat of annihilation is quietly but tremendously moving. The Englishman shaving, the Frenchman putting together a battered stove, the tailor mending the German's torn breeches, the sharing of food, the instinctive unanimity of their protective devices, bring out touching qualities of humanness that sink into the observer's consciousness as something universal. The men, as they reveal more and more of their individual natures, somehow become more and more representative as symbols, and this symbol of a common humanity is intensified by an extremely effective use of music. To distract his companions from the nerve-wracking sound of the guns the negro starts singing: each man takes up the song in his own language, and it is the same song—they all know it and love it though they sing it with different words.

Of course there is only one ending for such a situation: these five men who have become brothers must either cease to be brothers and fight each other again or band together against their countries—either way is death for them. And the crisis rushes upon them: their cooking fire has attracted eyes from both sides with its smoke and guns are trained upon their hiding place. There is a desperate attempt to fortify themselves. Then the Englishman says: "This is enough! We must get out!" Get out of the cellar? Get out of the fighting? Get out of the thing that makes fighting? The last we see of them is five figures side by side against the sky, tramping down the wire entanglements that block their way, stepping forward together.

There isn't anything new to be said about war. This picture says nothing new. But it says it differently. As a production it lacks something of the slick pictorial glibness that the ordinary run of movies have as a matter of course, even if they have nothing else. But it has that great cinematic rarity, the quality of being unforgettable, and that not only for what it does but for the way it is done. Its skillful combining of picture and sound for desired effects puts it very high in the technique of the present-day motion picture, and there are at least three pieces of acting that will stick in the memory for a long time.—J. S. H.

FILMS between the acts of stage plays, to set the correct atmosphere and avoid the tiresome waits under the present regime, are suggested by Arthur Ede of Bourne-mouth, England, in a letter to the *Era*, the British dramatic paper. Elimination of the intervals, so as to give a continuous dramatic development, would be still better, Mr. Ede says, but since actors are human and must have opportunity to rest, he favors the motion pictures selected to match the theme and background of the play.

Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Politics in Pictures

MOTION picture producers in this country have been slowly awakening to the fact that they might possibly introduce important social questions into their product without necessarily scaring people from the boxoffice. What they have done about it hasn't amounted to much because when they have picked up such subjects as bank failures or the bonus army they have dropped them again very hurriedly and switched to some old-time sex story. This may have been because they suddenly feared they were handling dynamite, or because they were timid about the extent of popular interest in a tale dealing with social problems and ideas, or simply because no one with ability or conviction happened to be constructing the scenario. Only in *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* did ability and sincerity work together effectively in following a new trend.

Now comes *Gabriel Over the White House*, in which the best efforts of Hollywood production have gone into a story that concerns nothing at all but political ideas. The general boxoffice verdict is still to come, but if advance showings are any indication the picture will stir up many a warm discussion.

The picture is effectively done from the audience point of view. Its scenario, its production, its acting, all measure up to the standard the public is used to, but no higher. It holds the interest as a story, and it has the unusual other interest of speaking out directly and forcibly on questions that are just now important to the American public. What it says the individual may quarrel with or not, according to his personal feelings and convictions. The film makes no pretence of philosophic detachment, or of presenting anything but what it wants to be heard.

It is frank propaganda, in short. It has

a solution for unemployment, for gangsters, for the war debts and for the reduction of national armaments in the interest of peace. It would enlist the unemployed in an army of workers, to fight the depression as it would fight a foreign enemy. It would declare outright war against gangsterdom and fight it with the army, trying gangsters by martial law instead of by criminal law. It would collect the war debts by the threat of a world-beating fighting force, and somehow—how, is not clear—compel the other nations to give up their huge military defenses and live in peace.

This is done by the fictional expedient of taking a hack politician of a president and giving him a knock on the head that changes his whole character, making him suddenly a courageous fighter for the rights of the people. There is a supernatural suggestion added that the angel Gabriel had something to do with it. In other words, a miracle makes the president of the United States a dictator, and as a dictator he puts across the Hearstian solutions of some of our problems.

Of course after a long and discouraging period of nothing effective apparently being accomplished by the government—which financial pinch has aroused the public to notice—this picture satisfies a great mass desire to see "something done." It dramatizes, with great assurance, a national wish, and fulfills that wish according to its own theories. To many people it will be completely satisfactory. To many others just buncombe. To still others vicious and dishonest. It can hardly impress any critical mind as anything better or more profound than a soap-box speech, with all a political orator's tricks of emphasis and omission given added effectiveness by its dramatic form.

The unusual thing about it is that it provides the exciting novelty of hearing political

ideas expounded from our screen for their own sake. The disturbing question it arouses is, would other, and contradictory, ideas, be permitted equally forceful expression on our screen also?—J. S. H.

Helen Hayes

IF the movies had remained silent Helen Hayes would probably never have taken vacations from the stage to act in pictures. She has little of the physical lure that used to make so many of our screen favorites. She happens to be an actress instead of a beauty. The fact that she can look extraordinarily lovely at times might not have been discovered in a score of screen tests, for her loveliness is so much more an effect of her acting than it is of makeup or skillful photography that it might never have showed up in a test—and without a satisfactory test how could she have got a chance to act on the screen?

But, with her voice to help her, chance was thrust upon her, and she has played five parts. For some reason they have all been sob parts, but they have put her in the front rank of screen stars. In *Arrowsmith* and *A Farewell to Arms* she suffered and died, in *The Sin of Madelon Claudet* and *The Son Daughter* she just suffered and suffered, with short little episodes of girlish gaiety and happiness. That seems to be her fate in motion pictures.

In *The White Sister* she suffers again, more poignantly than ever. The story that F. Marion Crawford wrote years ago shows plainly enough that it was made for an audience of an older day. It served the movies once before, when Lillian Gish moved gently through it in the fashion that some call ethereal and some anaemic. Helen Hayes puts far more life into it. She can seem young and virginal and yet seem flesh and blood—yea, and mind and spirit. Quite definitely she gives force and beauty to a drama that, in spite of the dignity and delicacy of its production, must seem pretty

remote from American life to the average audience. Miss Hayes is that rarity among screen actresses, one who though she is always unmistakably herself is artist enough to make a distinct and individual character of every role she plays. Her *White Sister* is actually and vividly a young Catholic girl whose love and religion are brought into conflict by a trick of fate. One can see the character grow in her impersonation, developed and strengthened by life and trial until the girl has become a woman. It is a moving performance that must be acclaimed as genuine art.—J. S. H.

Animal Fables

THE motion picture is certainly science's greatest gift to mankind for the telling of fairy stories: not the Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty type of romance but tales of fantasy and sheer physical impossibility that cannot be embodied in any existing natural forms. The motion picture can show what is not, what never was. It can show Gulliver among the giants and among the dwarfs. It can recreate extinct monsters of the early world. It can create King Kong.

King Kong may be taken as amusement or excitement. Not, in any possible way, as life, or as a sedative. It is sheer juvenile fiction, keyed up to its loudest and most extravagant. Years ago we had *The Lost World* with its battling prehistoric monsters—and the new film shows no advance in the mechanics of depicting those long-dead creatures—but it was a fairly sober and matter-of-fact film, novel but not gigantically sensational. *King Kong* improves upon legend and natural history by displaying a gargantuan ape so huge that a grown woman can lie in the palm of his hand and seem no bigger than a flower. And we have this tremendous creature not only kinging in his native jungle but tearing up elevated railroads and fighting airplanes in New York City.

For all its size the picture will not bear the weight of much critical inspection. It is crude and noisy, with the most infantile of plots. But it does something that nothing ever contrived could do except a motion picture. Not the written word, certainly not the stage, could bring to life such things as the slimey monster rising out of a misty jungle lake and upsetting a raft full of hunters, or King Kong snatching natives from their tree houses or climbing to the peak of the Empire State Building and fighting off a fleet of attacking airplanes. If the film proves nothing else, it proves that the motion picture is the most effective teller of fables.

A gentler and more credible fable is *The King of the Jungle*. In this the only thing you have to swallow is that a little boy could be brought up by lions and become a lion man. Mowgli and his wolves made that sort of fancy easily digestible long ago. Once you accept the fact that Kaspas is a brother to lions, the rest of the story is logical enough, and in its juvenile way full of interest. If the springs of its novelty had not been already pretty well drained by *Tarzan* it would stand out as a remarkable picture. Even so, by seeming more real than its predecessor, and lacking some of *Tarzan's* more obvious silliness, it is a delightful film for those who like its kind.—J. S. H.

A new educational pastime for students of motion pictures is recommended by Norman McLeod, well known director. He says; "Considerable enjoyment can be found in making lists of those scenes in talking pictures which one would like to see again. Without trying to cover the entire field, I have jotted down the first memorable scenes which came to my mind as samples of this 'game.' They are as follows: Jackie Cooper's prayer in *Skippy*; the passion dance in *Tabu*; the death of Regis Toomey in *Alibi*; Hal Skelly's burlesque Wedding March dance in *The Dance of Life*; the land rush in *Cimarron*; the hand

and butterfly scene in *All Quiet on the Western Front*; Wallace Beery slapping Jackie Cooper in *The Champ*; Miriam Hopkins' transition into the butterfly in *The Smiling Lieutenant*; the prisoners yelling 'Ya! Ya!' in *The Criminal Code*; the gun duel in *The Virginian* between Gary Cooper and Walter Huston; David Landau's farewell to Sylvia Sidney in *Street Scene*; Edward Robinson's kicking Margaret Livingston in *Smart Money*; Lionel Barrymore's appeal to the jury in *A Free Soul*; Fredric March's transition to Mr. Hyde in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; the 'Beyond the Blue Horizon' number in *Monte Carlo*; the return of James Cagney's body to his mother in *The Public Enemy*; Jeanne Eagels in the last scene of *The Letter*; and Marie Dressler's handwave to the wedding in *Min and Bill*."

A project was started in London recently for a complete cinema university. There is to be a large central building and a number of lecture halls and theatres fitted with sound film apparatus. Authorities on various subjects will offer lecture courses to accompany exhibitions of cultural and educational films. The significance of the arrangement according to the report is the altered relationship of films and lectures. Here instead of films being chosen spasmodically to supplement lectures, the lectures will be designed to amplify the message of the films. The screen will be central in the curriculum. Further plans provide a department for the showing of foreign films in their native language, thus opening up an important new avenue of language instruction. The entire scheme, it is stated, is upon a different scale from any thus far offered to make the most of the educational forces which are peculiar to the cinema and it is expected that the London University will become a model for many similar institutions.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

How Can Motion Picture Programs and Policies Be Fitted to Community Needs

By E. S. C. COPPOCK

Mr. Coppock, who is manager of the Paramount Theatre in Staten Island, N. Y., holds a viewpoint of understanding toward both the theatre and the Better Films Council activity. This comes from his experience with theatres and audiences in various cities. He has been with the Paramount Company for seven years, in San Antonio, Houston, Kansas City and Rochester, before coming to Staten Island. He states that in each of these cases the business of the theatre was improved by the practice of a policy of co-ordination between the theatre and the community, and in Staten Island he is a member of the local council cooperating in every way with it. He was asked to present the subject of community cooperation on the program of the Annual Conference of the Board and through the Magazine we offer his address to a larger audience.

ALTHOUGH I cannot formally speak for the thousands of theatre managers in this country, yet I do know that because their problems are similar to mine, they must share with me a sincere feeling of admiration for the splendid efforts of organized Better Films Councils, toward promoting better relationships between motion picture theatres and the communities they serve. Not only motion picture theatres, but this entire industry that ranks fifth among the world's great enterprises, depends entirely upon public favor, and in serving as the intermediary between the theatre and the community, organized clubs can serve a two-fold beneficial purpose, bringing about an improvement for both the theatre and the community.

Entertainment is a rather intangible thing, and it is often difficult to measure its worth when it is considered that great masses of people gather together to enjoy in common this one great medium of entertainment, the motion picture. Sitting side by side in a theatre there may be a person of the highest education and culture and an illiterate

moron. The rights of these two people within the theatre are equal. They must both be entertained, as must also the wide range of ages and intellects between these two. Please appreciate our difficult problem in handling this case of mob psychology. The true appreciation of this problem is the secret of promoting harmonious relations between the theatre and the community, and the furtherance of the motion picture art.

It is oftentimes unfortunate that persons such as yourselves who are active in seeking the better things, limit your impressions to those of your own circle of friends. When you take upon yourselves the problem of indirectly representing the people as a whole to the theatre you must encompass all of the minds, types and races within your community. If the things you sought in entertainment were purely your personal desires, your motive would be destructively selfish. Because you are active means that you are part of a thinking group able to understand and appreciate certain forms of motion picture art that might be entirely above the bulk of the audience. Rather than have you feel that I am prejudiced against your efforts, let me assure you now that I am entirely in favor of the plan, heartily in accord with the policies you endorse; to such an extent that I am proud to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Staten Island Better Films Council.

In gathering together the desires of the community that you represent; strike, if possible, an average mental age for the people you represent. That is the age with which most can be accomplished, because it represents the majority. True enough, it would

be foolhardy to play down to an audience in that it would mean a constant lessening of production value in motion picture entertainment. I would say rather that we should play to a point a trifle above the average mind of the community. If you and I are to win the favor of the people, we must not attempt too much too suddenly. You have ahead of you a task that is difficult in that you must work slowly, being tolerant of the whims and fancies of the people, yet always striving, bit by bit, to increase their understanding and appreciation of motion picture entertainment. In your ambition to see immediate results, do not be carried away by your personal desires. By working patiently and consistently and not asking too much at first, the result, after a period of years, will be a valuable thing for the furtherance and betterment of this industry.

To depart from generalities for a moment, let me cite for you problems of operation that often confront a theatre manager. His buying power in securing a picture for his theatre may be limited by the size of his theatre and the admission prices, and by his affiliation with other theatres. The producers of motion pictures naturally strive to sell their pictures where they receive the most for them. The theatre owner having a chain of theatres consequently can offer more to the film producing company than the owner of a single theatre. Thus the owner of one house may be forced to take a lesser quality of product. In doing so he may be forced to resort to desperate means to maintain his patronage. One of these devices is the exhibition of so-called double feature programs. Surely it is evident to you that a theatre manager playing double features requires a great deal more product and in order to fill out his programs for every week of the year he must of need include a quantity of inferior pictures. But bargain hunters everywhere see only the quantity inducements to buy. Through the years there has been no more harmful influence toward the destruction of values in motion picture entertainment than double feature programs.

You cannot expect a theatre to continually provide two splendid pictures on each program for the simple reason that it probably has resorted to this policy to meet the competition of other theatres showing finer pictures, and in the face of this competition has probably reduced admission prices. This means a limited income, and it cannot purchase first rate feature pictures. If it is unable to play two good pictures on a double program, it is reasonable to expect that the other picture will be of such poor entertainment value as to be a reflection on the entire motion picture industry. If you encourage the support of double features you are actually encouraging the small producers to turn out cheap, worthless pictures to supply the demand.

There is a greater variety of entertainment available in the field of short subjects than could ever be offered by the legitimate stage in any form, by a tour of the world at tremendous expense, or by hours and hours of research. Through the medium of these short subjects all of the fascinating things of the world are brought before your eyes that you may enjoy their beauty, charm or novelty from the intimate view provided by the screen. The thousands of splendid short subjects on travel, music, art, humor, history, comedy and so forth, are being shelved by the double feature programs in order to satisfy the unthinking demand of the people for bargains.

To me a motion picture program must be as well balanced as a carefully planned dinner. During the two hours or more that you sit in the theatre, it is entirely feasible to bring to you drama, tragedy, comedy, color, music, historical facts and a tremendous variety of novelty divertissements. Variety is the very essence of the amusement business, and in sacrificing variety the theatre is bringing about self-destruction.

I cannot help but refer back to my original plea for you to be tolerant. Suppose your theatre presents two complete programs a week. This means that the manager must buy 104 feature pictures a year and that

these pictures must be bought before they are even made, purchased solely on the reputation of the studio, the author of the story, the director and the proposed cast. Yes, it is almost as bad as buying a "pig in a poke," but so keen is the competition within this business that this form of selling motion pictures is the accepted thing. If in the 104 programs that your theatre shows in a year there may be a few that are not up to par, don't deride the manager of the theatre, don't shout to your friends that the theatre plays only worthless feature pictures. Don't magnify the few times that you are not pleased with the entertainment offered. Don't let an occasional bad impression crowd out the good impression that is created by the majority of the programs offered.

This intangible thing called entertainment is an extremely difficult thing to manufacture. Its esthetic nature makes the final worth of a picture the difficult thing to determine while the picture is in the course of production. The producers of motion pictures, because of the nature of their business, are sportsmen in every sense of the word. They are gambling huge sums of money on public whims and tastes that change as often and as easily as a new hat or tie. Their problem is extremely difficult because they must anticipate the desires of the people. They have no real guide except past performances as reflected in box offices of theatres.

Your efforts in cooperating with theatre managers will become an invaluable guide to motion picture producers. You are better suited to determine the entertainment needs of your communities than the manager of the theatre. Discuss the matter with him. I venture to say without fear of contradiction that you will find him eager to share his problems with you. Your advice, tempered of course by his explanation of possible physical limitations, will prove an aid to him in business, not only for the present, but on into an indefinite future. You are making the people motion picture conscious

in a constructive way that leads to an appreciation of finer things from the screen. With this appreciation and understanding by the people and their demand for better entertainment comes an assurance of my future in this business and an assurance to the millions of people whose investments in the great motion picture companies are bringing this form of entertainment to you people.

Be tolerant, know your community, your entire community, seek its level and strive for constant but gradual improvement. You are a valuable asset to the community and to the motion picture industry and particularly to that one man who because of the nature of his business lives in a world of complaints, of bargaining and of constant striving to please: your theatre manager. Know your manager and let him know you.

What of the Youth?

A point that is expressed in the discussion of audience suitability of pictures—whether for mature or family audience—is that young people of today are so sophisticated, they see and know everything, therefore how and why classify for them. In this connection there is a thought of interest which appeared under the heading "Are We Keeping Up With Youth" in a recent issue of *School Executives Magazine*. It says, "The progressive school man or woman should spend little time in complaining and sighing for the good old days. Many prominent educators have been all too fond of proclaiming in the highways and in the byways that our high school girls and boys are impossibly sophisticated and that environmental factors and tendencies of the times are such as to make a sane program of education almost impossible.

"We are told that students are overstimulated and over-developed on the

social side; that they have become so wise and blasé that school work has become a bore to them. Is this really true? Or is it true that school programs are antiquated and are failing to keep up with our students? After all, the life in which high school boys and girls live is the life their parents and elders, as educators and as social and governmental leaders, have built for them. The life may be a bit too rich, and there is no doubt that there are phases of modern life which are far from ideal. In spite of this fact, who is there who would be willing to exchange our present civilization for any that has existed in the past? It may not be ideal in every respect but complaining about it will not help to improve it. Our best hope for the solution of the problem must lie in marshalling the wholesome forces of life so that the development of our youth may be more advantageously balanced."

This holds a challenge for those interested in community motion picture activity to do their part in marshalling the great force of the motion picture to best serve the young people through stressing family weekend programs and their support. Discrimination and appreciation as regards the motion picture is what we need to emphasize among young people. This means character development for the youth and more of the finer pictures in the future to answer their trained and critical demands. The spread of the junior work in the Motion Picture Councils is an encouraging recognition of this.

GLENN Frank, President of the University of Wisconsin, after seeing a demonstration of a science film recently said, "The teacher who is willing to ignore and to let lie unused so amazing a teaching medium as this is either blind to progress or simply scared lest the film become too vivid a competitor to mediocre teachers."

A Book on the Use of Films in the Church

A textbook of helpful information for those who are interested in using motion pictures in church activity has recently come from the press. It is titled "Screen and Projection in Christian Education" and H. Paul Janes is the author. The opening paragraph of chapter one states that church leaders have recognized the value of motion pictures, stereopticon slides and opaque projection pictures in the church and the church school but the cost of projection equipment, the lack of materials and the lack of knowledge of how to use them have prevented their wider use. This book then sets itself the task of giving to those interested information which will lessen these difficulties.

The relative value of still pictures, slides and silent and sound films is discussed in chapter one. Attention is also given here to screens, projectors and color film as well as to sound-on-disc and sound-on-film. The importance and use of visual aids in the church program is the subject of chapter two. The sources, selection and adaptation of material is treated in the next chapter. With films suggested as teaching adjuncts in church schools attention is given to suggesting suitable age group pictures. This topic may hold thoughts of interest to those selecting films for use among children outside of the church as well. There is a chapter devoted to the use of visual aids in the recreational program of the church. The best method of putting these programs over to the public is outlined with suggestions for posters, newspaper advertisements, etc. Much valuable technical information is given in a chapter devoted to the mechanical problems of projection.

Anyone particularly interested in the specialized church use of films should find this little volume, numbering 160 pages, of merit. It is published by the Westminster Press of Philadelphia, Penn.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

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FRANCES C. BARRETT

HELEN CAHILL

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*BE MINE TONIGHT—Screen story by I. V. Cube and A. Joseph, music by Mischa Spoliansky, directed by Anatol Litvak, with a cast including Jan Kiepura and Magda Schneider. Universal, 9 reels. An English production of a musical comedy with the Italian operatic singer, Jan Kiepura. The story content is trite but the acting is excellent and the magnificent voice of the star makes the picture outstanding. Family audience.

*THE BIG CAGE—From the book by Clyde Beatty and Edward Anthony, directed by Kurt Neumann, with a cast headed by Clyde Beatty. Universal, 8 reels. An interesting story of an animal trainer in a circus whose one great ambition is to train lions and tigers together. The most interesting thing in the picture is the fact that Beatty is a real trainer and is with Ringling Brothers circus. Family audience. Junior matinee.

BONDAGE—From the novel "House of Refuge" by Grace S. Leake, directed by Alfred Santell, with a cast including Dorothy Jordan and Alexander Kirkland. Fox, 7 reels. The troubles of a girl in a home for unmarried mothers. Sincere and earnest as a protest against certain forms of social injustice, but not to be classed as light entertainment. Mature audience.

THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL—Screen story by Jack Natteford, directed by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. Columbia, 7 reels. A Yankee "bandit" rescues a starving village in old California. Something of a novelty in Westerns done with a different touch. Family audience. Junior matinee.

CHRISTOPHER STRONG—From the novel by Gilbert Frankau, directed by Dorothy Arzner, with a cast including Katherine Hepburn and Colin Clive. RKO, 9 reels. The story of a fine and courageous woman flyer and her love for a married man. Done with dignity and sympathy, but the great popular attraction to it will be Katherine Hepburn, who has an excellent part to follow up *A Bill of Divorcement*. Mature audience.

DESTINATION UNKNOWN—Screen story by Tom Buckingham, directed by Tay Garnett, with a cast including Pat O'Brien and Ralph Bellamy. Universal, 7 reels. Drifting aimlessly after a storm which has carried away the rigging of a ship loaded with wine, twelve men seem doomed when the last drop of water is gone. Suddenly a stowaway appears who is to them a symbol of the Christ—he shows them that the wine on board is really water and brings the ship to a rocky coast where they are saved. An unusual picture. Family audience.

*GABRIEL OVER THE WHITE HOUSE—From the novel by Thomas F. Tweed, directed by Gregory La Cava, with a cast headed by Walter Huston. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. The story of a routine politician president of the United States who through a miraculous accident is changed entirely in character and does bold and courageous things for the good of the country. Unusual in its approach to public problems, impressive enough to stir up genuine feelings and thought. Family audience.

GIRL MISSING—Screen story by Carl Erickson, directed by Robert Florey, with a cast including Ben Lyon and Mary Brian. Warner, 6 reels. A light comedy with very amusing dialogue. A couple of gold-digging chorus girls are out to get an ex-chorus girl who has netted a wealthy young man and has snubbed her former pals. Mature audience.

HUMANITY—From the novel "The Road to Heaven" by Harold Fried, directed by John Francis Dillon, with a cast including Alexander Kirkland and Ralph Morgan. Fox, 7 reels. A father and son, both doctors, the elder devoted to unselfish service, the younger tempted by money—and how the older man's ideals won

the day. Quite human, unrelievedly serious, done with much effectiveness. *Family audience.*

INDIA SPEAKS—Directed by Walter Futter, featuring Richard Halliburton. RKO, 8 reels. An unusual travel picture, with some fiction injected to give it more narrative interest. There is a good deal of emphasis on the gruesome and cruel, but the whole thing is lively Halliburton stuff. *Family audience.*

THE KISS BEFORE THE MIRROR—From a story by Ladislaus Fodor, directed by James Whale, with a cast including Nancy Carroll, Frank Morgan and Paul Lukas. Universal, 7 reels. The attorney for the defense in a murder case of a jealous husband who killed his wife, finds himself in the same position as the accused and because of this he is able to plead convincingly. *Mature audience.*

THE LONE AVENGER—Screen story by Forrest Sheldon and Betty Burbridge, directed by Alan James, with a cast headed by Ken Maynard. World Wide, 6 reels. A well-made and exciting Western but the plot is not novel—a son clearing his father's name. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MAN HUNT—Screen story by Leonard Praskins and Sam Mintz, directed by Irving Cummings, with a cast including Junior Durkin, Charlotte Henry and Mrs. Wallace Reid. RKO, 7 reels. An excellent family picture with a decided flavor of Booth Tarkington at his best, about a boy who wanted to be a detective. A well-made movie, persuasively directed and an unusually human performance by Junior Durkin. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MASQUERADER—From the novel by Katherine Cecil Thurston, directed by Richard Wallace, with a cast including Ronald Colman and Elissa Landi. United Artists, 7 reels. The familiar plot of two men so nearly alike that one can take the place of the other in his public life leading to enormous complications. Entertainingly done and very English. *Mature audience.*

MURDERS IN THE ZOO—Screen story by Philip Wylie and Seton I. Miller, directed by Edward Sutherland, with a cast including Charles Ruggles, Lionel Atwill and Kathleen Burke. Paramount, 7 reels. An exciting and interesting horror story which has enough comedy relief to make the film suitable for anyone who reacts normally to gruesomeness. Although it is placed on the mature audience list some thought it a family picture since the title would warn theatre-goers what to expect. *Mature audience.*

MUSSOLINI SPEAKS—Edited by Jack Cohn, comments by Lowell Thomas. Columbia, 8 reels. A compound of newsreels and travelogues glorifying the achievements of Mussolini in Italy. Very ably edited from its point of view which is enthusiastically and uncritically pro-fascist. Instructive in an external way, but shows very little of Mussolini's methods. Sug-

gested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*

OLIVER TWIST—From the novel by Charles Dickens, directed by William Cowen, with a cast including Dickie Moore and Irving Pichel. Monogram, 7 reels. A true and interesting version of the Dickens story about a small orphan who runs away from an orphanage and is picked up in London by a gang of pickpockets. Irving Pichel as "Fagin" gives the outstanding characterization in the film. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OUR BETTERS—From the play by Somerset Maugham, directed by George Cukor, with a cast headed by Constance Bennett. RKO, 9 reels. Witty and rather searching photographed play of an English smart set dominated by an American girl who has married a title, in which infidelity and general cattiness fail to make a very pleasant existence. Smartly done with a role admirably suited to the star. *Mature audience.*

THE PHANTOM BROADCAST—From a story by Tristram Tupper, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast including Ralph Forbes and Vivienne Osborne. Monogram, 6 reels. A rather novel story, with some surprises in its plot, of a radio singer and a gang plotting to make a racket of radio talent. Ralph Forbes gives an excellent performance in an unusual character. *Family audience.*

PICK UP—From the story by Vina Delmar, directed by Marion Gering, with a cast including Sylvia Sidney and George Raft. Paramount, 8 reels. A girl just released from prison and with no place to go takes refuge in a taxicab and the driver feeling sorry for her takes her home. They fall in love and complications arise but with the aid of a clever lawyer their troubles are smoothed out. *Mature audience.*

PLEASURE CRUISE—From the play by Austin Allen, directed by Frank Tuttle, with a cast including Roland Young and Genevieve Tobin. Fox, 7 reels. An amusing comedy of the *Guardsman* type, of a jealous husband who tests his wife's fidelity. Lively and gay. *Mature audience.*

SHAME—Music by Dmitri Shostakovich, directed by Frederick Ermler and Sergei Utkevitich, with a cast headed by Vladimir Gardin. Amkino, 7 reels. An unusual Russian film (with English subtitles) in which we find individuals instead of class-types, in the drama of their daily lives. The story has to do with getting a factory's work done right, but there is also a love element, and much cheerfulness in place of the usual Soviet solemnity about their problems. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*

SOVIETS ON PARADE—Directed by S. Poselsky. Kinematrade, 5 reels. A long and interesting newsreel of the Soviet anniversary in Moscow, showing the leaders of the Soviet government and celebrating the progress made since the revolution. *Family audience.*

SWEEPINGS—From the novel by Lester Cohen, directed by John Cromwell, with a cast headed by Lionel Barrymore. RKO, 9 reels. Interesting story of a man who after the Chicago fire builds up a big business, making millions. After the death of his wife he brings up the four children only to be bitterly disappointed in them. Lionel Barrymore does a splendid piece of acting and the others in the cast are good. The film has well sustained interest. *Family audience.*

THE TELEGRAPH TRAIL—Screen story by Kurt Kempler, directed by Tenny Wright, with a cast headed by John Wayne. Warner, 5 reels. The struggle of the early settlers in the West to build a telegraph system despite the Indian raids instigated by a white man. The story is interestingly told and there is enough romance and comedy to make this an entertaining film. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TERROR ABOARD—Screen story by Harvey Thew and Manuel Seff, directed by Paul Sloan, with a cast including John Halliday, Charles Ruggles and Neil Hamilton. Paramount, 7 reels. A thrilling murder mystery aboard a luxurious yacht. The owner, in order to keep his guests and crew from learning of the calamity that has befallen him, murders all but three who are finally rescued. *Mature audience.*

UNDER THE TONTO RIM—From the novel by Zane Grey, directed by Henry Hathaway, with a cast headed by Stuart Erwin. Paramount, 7 reels. Comedy drama of the West in which the Tonto Kid, played by Stuart Erwin, is forced through circumstances to live on a hog farm. When a wealthy girl he loves finally consents to marry him he is overjoyed to leave the loathesome pigs only to discover that her father's ranch is a hog ranch. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

UNTAMED AFRICA—Directed by Winant D. Hubbard. Warner, 5 reels. An interesting expedition into Northern Rhodesia to photograph wild animals. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WHEN STRANGERS MARRY—Screen story by Maximilian Foster, directed by Clarence Badger, with a cast including Jack Holt and Lillian Bond. Columbia, 7 reels. After a gay scene in Paris the plot develops into the familiar one of the engineer building a railroad in the tropics and his wife being lonely. But the characterizations are vivid, the dialogue brisk and human, and the action full of interest. There is novelty in the wife's not being tempted to unfaithfulness. *Mature audience.*

THE WHIRLWIND—Screen story by Stuart Anthony, directed by D. Ross Lederman, with a cast headed by Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels. Three pals, one of them an Indian, clean out some villainy in a western town. Brisk action and humor. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***THE WHITE SISTER**—From the novel by F. Marion Crawford, directed by Victor Fleming,

with a cast headed by Helen Hayes and Clark Gable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 12 reels. Considerably modernized, beautifully acted and directed with admirable sympathy and effectiveness, this story of a girl who became a nun when she believed her lover killed in the war makes a very appealing picture. As usual Helen Hayes shows herself one of the finest actresses on the screen. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Hell on Earth

7 reels

Family audience.

(see page 8)

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

INFORMATIONALS

ALLEZ OOP—Remarkable acrobatic stunts. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*

BALI (Vagabond Adventures)—Travelogue. RKO. *Family audience.*

CALIFORNIA (Spirit of the Campus)—Scenic of University of California with school music. Educational. *Family audience.*

GEORGIA TECH (Spirit of the Campus)—Scenic of Tech with school music. Educational. *Family audience.*

MAIN STREETS (World Travel Talks)—Some of the world's principal thoroughfares. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 10—Paramount. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 9—Columbia. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NOS. 10-11—Paramount. *Family audience.*

*THE SEA—Marvelous picture of undersea life. Suggested for schools and libraries. Worth being kept permanently available. Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SEA DEVILS—Deep sea fishing. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

SPORT THRILLS NO. 6—Fishing, hunting, etc., Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, AND SKITS

ALMA MARTYR—Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

THE KID FROM BORNEO—Our Gang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. *Family audience.*

MOONLIGHT FANTASY—Vincent Lopez and his orchestra. Paramount. *Family audience.*

THE PHARMACIST—W. C. Fields. Paramount, 2 rls. *Family audience.*

RAMBLING ROUND RADIO ROW NO. 5—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

THE SINGING BOXER—Donald Novis. Paramount, 2 rls. *Family audience.*

THAT'S THE SPIRIT—Noble Sissle and his orchestra. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

TORCHY TURNS TURTLE—Ray Cooke. Educational, 2 rls. *Family audience.*

WALKING THE BABY—Burns and Allen. Paramount. *Family audience.*

WRONG GORILLA—Circus comedy. Vitaphone, 2 rls. *Family audience.*

CARTOONS

BETTY BOOP'S BIRTHDAY PARTY (Talkartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*BIRDS IN THE SPRING (Silly Symphony)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BOSKO IN PERSON (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

THE LUMBER CHAMP (Pooch the Pup)—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*MICKEY'S MELLERDRAMMER (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OH SUSANNA (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE ORGAN GRINDER (Merry Melody)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

THE PEANUT VENDOR (Bouncing Ball)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ROMEO AND JULIET (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience.*

WOODEN SHOES (Krazy Kat)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
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An Opportunity to Promote
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The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committee affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VIII, No. 5

May, 1933



Toni van Eyck in "Hertha's Erwachen" (see page 11)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through cooperation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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The Ritual of the Movies

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

This article is the first part of Mr. Potamkin's address at the last National Board of Review Conference. Mr. Potamkin, among the foremost of international film critics, is well-known to our readers for his work as a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays.

I would like to describe the motion picture as the major contemporary ritual, and I do that not to be high sounding, but to define the characteristics of the movie as we know it.

Professor Morris Cohen, of City College, New York City, once said that baseball is our religion today. I take exception to that, because though the baseball spectator has long been called the fan, he is, in a sense, a critic of sport. There is almost no baseball fan so-called who does not know the game, and when he goes to the baseball game, though he may be an enthusiast and may lose his head, nevertheless he knows a good play when he sees it and he knows a good play on the enemy's side as well as on the side he is cheering, and that is a characteristic which the movie fan does not possess. The movie fan is strictly a fan, the word fan being an abbreviation of fanatic. So that we have at the bottom of the hierarchy, the laity, the fan.

The moving picture industry has done everything possible to intensify the ritual itself but not the work of art. In the building of these large temples and cathedrals—and

I say they are rightly called temples and cathedrals—everything has been done to merchandise the show. The money changers are in the temple. What have they done in the last few years? Have they improved the pictures? They have done things to the stage show which is part of the ritual. They have done things to the basement: into the women's room there may have been introduced a Helena Rubenstein demonstration of preparations, cosmetics; in the men's room there may have been set up billiard tables and demonstrations of golfing; and there may have been needle swallows and a gentleman playing the piano. In the upper regions there may have been quartettes and quintettes making chamber music. And always, of course, there are the ushers in their armor. Everything has been done to inveigle the audience, and it is my contention that not until the audience ceases being a part of the ritual does it become an audience. In a ritual there is no audience because the fan is part of the ritual. The observer has no objective attitude towards the thing that is going on. That is what has happened in the movie, and not only in the larger theatres, but also in the smaller ones, where premiums are handed out. The ten cent movie house on Third Avenue hands out dinnerware premiums. As attractions these are means of bolstering the boxoffice; as influences they

inveigle the audience. The film on the screen has remained much the same.

The movie is at present constructed to be momentarily effective, and even when major ideas are carried the result is usually a momentary result. But take a film like *I Am A Fugitive From A Chain Gang*, probably the best film in a long time from Hollywood, were it not for the last moment the film would not be memorable. That saved the film in the memory of the audience and made everything that went before it remembered. This very seldom happens in motion pictures, that an incident can be retroactive. Try to think back to pictures that had important subject matter, and see if they are memorable in your mind. You will find it very difficult to remember motion pictures for their point, for their idea, because they are so built as to simply assure a response from the audience at the moment, and that is, by the way, to my way of thinking, one of the reasons audiences are not coming back to the movie theatres. We are all, in our way, philosophers—I will put in quotation marks—"quasi-philosophers, pseudo-philosophers"—but the very fact that we have proverbs existing proves we like to make deductions, and when individuals go to a movie they like those movies, even though they are poor movies, which seem to give them what they call an idea, philosophy, a thought.

For instance, I do not object to the horror film because it is horrible. As a matter of fact, most of the time it is not horrible; it is funny, because when you give to vague notions concrete forms you make them ridiculous. My objection to the horror film is that it does not stress the possible, even pseudo-idea in it. I remember going to see *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, one of the best as far as construction is concerned. I sat next to a young man who all through the antics of Mr. Hyde kept on saying, "Hully gee, gee!" He could not grasp it. He knew there was something meant, but the exaggeration so overrode the idea of dual personality that finally he went out. I

walked out with him, watching him. He was sorely perplexed, but he could not associate in his mind the antics with any notion that he was after. And that is why after a time horror films do not attract audiences or a film like *The Island of Lost Souls* does not have much of a response from the audience.

In the whole aspect of the ritual, as I have said, you really eliminate the audience, and that is one of the things that the movie wants to do, it wants to eliminate the audience, wants to make the audience uncritical. But what has happened in the last years?

Conditions being what they are, people have become a little more skeptical, they do not fall for certain things, and even the industry itself has realized that it has no longer a uniform audience. It can not say that even a Tom Mix picture will have a uniform audience as it has had in the past. It has a split audience reaction and it is afraid of it. At first it was very much afraid of it, indeed, so much afraid of anything resembling disagreements of the audience that one company sent out a dictum to its house managers to eliminate from newsreels any clips that might remotely resemble Bolshevik propaganda, and they meant by that the elimination of any scene of a bread line, because they were afraid of audience reactions. The reaction occurred once during the showing of a clip on prohibition and one of Mussolini, where the audience reacted the opposite way.

Where you have a ritual you will eventually have cults, and the cults may arise from two sources. They may arise from dissent with the ritual or they may arise from the exaggeration of certain points in the ritual. One of the first cult tendencies came from France. After the War the young men of France, some of them who went in for film production, some critics, some writers, began to view the movie again, and they were displeased with what they called the shop-made film and they began the Film Club. Among the individuals was one who went under the name of Canuds who is now dead. I have called him the missionary of the film-as-art.

He was enthusiastic, he loved the movie. There was another man, Poirier, one of the finest of the French directors; another the late Louis Delluc, really the pioneer in the new French forms, and another was Moissinac, a critic. They formed the first Film Club. From the first Film Club many have derived. In France itself in 1929, when I was there, there were probably a dozen by various names, some of them fantastic affairs to which people came simply to have fights, where they would debate the merits of the particular film shown. There the young Frenchmen, who always like to squabble, could get up and call the others names. I remember one incident where one man got up and said not only was the picture rotten but the piano player was just as bad. Actually what evolved was either this kind of vandalism or the tendency to create the cult.

We have had cults in America, the cult of *Caligari*, for instance. I agree with Moissinac that this film is a date and not a milestone. There have been other cults. The French began the Charlie Chaplin cult. They went into the special cult, which may amuse Americans, of the art of the American film. The favorite picture in France today, the favorite artistic film, is generally an American one, and what we consider here trash, aesthetically or ethically reprehensible, will be exhibited in Paris as art. There was a picture *A Girl in Every Port*, a Victor McLaglen picture. There were some young and lovely women in the film and the picture was clever and well timed, so it became an art film, and in one of the leading highbrow periodicals in Paris there was a review in which Victor McLaglen was called "un grand artiste." Anyone who knows him knows he is only and always Victor McLaglen. This sort of exoticism is in the French Film Club, and we have the same attitude here in America toward the foreign product.

The film club came to America not as the film club. It was carried over in its diluted form, the little cinema.

What happened in those places in America "dedicated" to the little cinema? We had one cult, the Ufa cult. All the films from the studio of Ufa—which in early days produced films like *The Last Laugh*, still one of the greatest pictures ever made—were called art in America. Finally even the critics got wise to it, so that they began to pan the little cinemas. Today we can hardly speak of them as little cinemas; they are houses showing foreign products, sometimes good pictures. Nevertheless, we can accredit the little cinemas for introducing to American audiences some of the leading films that have been made which otherwise would never have entered America.

I may say also for the film club that a great director, perhaps not great, but certainly important, René Clair, the young Frenchman, is decidedly a product of the film club movement.

The film club has come into America and that is what concerns us. The film club has come into America as a growth of the original film club idea—for instance, the Film Forum and the Film Society, and as a member of both I consider them from the same standpoint, not by what they are doing so early in their careers, but what they must do if they are to observe the organic principle of the film club, and that is, that the film club has its ultimate justification only when it recognizes itself as an educational forum. That is why I am justified in bringing the film club into this discussion. I want to oppose in this discussion the cult idea of the film club, where gentlemen and ladies in high hats and evening gowns are shown Mickey Mouse to satisfy their sense of the exquisite. I oppose also the Messianic film cult which thinks that the movie is a thing absolute and apart, that has no relation to other arts or has no relation to life. We have had much writing in which the whole tendency is to say that the movie is pure only when it has no relation to anything else. We have to fight both the populist cult and the Messianic cult. The movie is not

going to save the world and we are not going to save the movie, but we have certain functions to perform, and through the film club we may realize the conception of the movie, whether entertainment or instructional or educational, because it is a medium of propaganda and influence.

I would say, then, that the film club is to the audience generally what the critic is to the spectator; that is, the film club provides the critical audience. But I do not want it to end there.

I have no feeling for, no faith in the film club, in the esoteric film club, which wants to remain apart from the general problem of the motion picture. That is why I rather dislike the idea of such high rates being asked for membership in these organizations, but the situation at present makes it necessary in order to pay the expenses.

In London there is the largest of all film clubs, the London Film Society, and the London Film Society has been influential because its audiences number some two thousand, which is already a mass audience, so to speak; and that was possible in London because of the absence of Sunday afternoon showings so that people could come to showings of the Film Society. The influence was through the large membership, and eventually theatres began to take the films recommended by the Film Society. Also, the Film Society through its efforts weakened the political censorship, so that certain important Russian films like *Potemkin* and *Mother* were able to be shown to general audiences.

The film club has to correlate its programs in two directions, the aesthetic and the social. In the aesthetic direction it has to take part in the history and evolution of the motion picture. That is why sometimes it is important to show pictures which may not be today so entertaining, but which are important in what they have contributed to the history of the film.

Then, in the social direction, it must correlate the movie with the manifestations of society. Therefore, in the end it must show

those pictures which are important to what is occurring in society, and I, for one, though I am supposed to be a critic of art, maintain that purpose is the more important, the social purpose. I say otherwise the film club is nothing but a high hat affair and no art can be furthered by being isolated in exclusive circles. That is why I am interested in what has been begun in the way of these Motion Picture Study Clubs, in the Better Films Councils, because the tie-up with the community is present.

Peace Film

MUST *WAR BE?* is the title of a five reel educational picture produced by the Peace Films Foundation. It depicts in a dramatic way the struggle which has been going on since the Armistice between the forces trying to organize permanent peace and those tending to perpetuate the war system. It is a sound picture throughout making it possible not only to reproduce historical events more realistically but also to provide a running comment which gives much better continuity than silent titles.

The film is well adapted for use by schools, colleges, churches and peace societies and has been endorsed by the World Alliance for International Friendship through Churches, Committee on International Relations of the American Association of University Women, President of the Council of Congregational Women of Connecticut, Students International Union, League of Nations Association and Federal Council of Churches.

Details regarding the film and the programs of organizations sponsoring it can be learned by addressing the Peace Films Foundation, 18 E. 41st St., New York City.

Did you receive a copy of the Annual Catalog of Selected Pictures, 1932-1933? If not send for one today, it contains interesting material in addition to pictures.

Teaching Languages with Foreign Sound Pictures

By EDWARD B. GINSBURG

The motion picture has, for some time, been recognized as a valuable teaching tool, but classroom use has been limited chiefly to the silent film. Within the past year, however, a new service adapting the sound film in education has been successfully undertaken in New York City. The experiment, which has been carried out through the cooperation of Dr. L. A. Wilkins, Director of the Department of Modern Languages of the New York City Board of Education, and the International Cinema League, was described by Mr. Ginsburg, Director of the League at this year's Annual Conference.

INTERNATIONALLY films have an extremely important aspect that is just beginning to be understood. Hitherto communication between nations has been primarily through books, newspapers, hearsay, and other indirect agencies which are vague at best and often designed as conscious propaganda. The advent of motion pictures, however, has provided a vastly more satisfactory contact. Americans now can see the people of France, whether they be Paris business men, or the fishermen of Bretagne, or the peasants of Le Midi, living in the midst of their own cities, countrysides and culture. Knowing them genuinely and realistically, as only a photograph can represent, means understanding their views and problems more keenly.

In addition, films have made it possible for one nation to enjoy the arts and theatre of another as never before. Every year America receives more than a hundred European films acted by leading members of the Comedie Francaise or the Spanish, Russian and Berlin stages and based on stories by the leading classical and modern authors of these countries. These films have been made available by the International Cinema League in New York to hundreds of schools and colleges throughout the country, for use in entertainment and instruction.

Teaching foreign languages with foreign sound pictures can therefore be seen as only one use of these pictures in the United

States. What should be emphasized is that teaching the mechanics of language through "talkies" is only incidental to the transmission of the content and enjoyment of foreign culture. Nevertheless, talking films have proven to be of paramount importance in the actual mastering of a language. I remember that when I spent my junior year abroad, Professor Morize of Harvard advised me that the best possible way to learn the language was to go to the theatre, listen hard, and keep on going until I could understand what the actors were saying.

In New York City a series of extensive and quite successful experiments have been carried out with talking films in correlation with city high school instruction in modern languages. No discussion of the subject can be complete without emphasizing the assistance Dr. L. A. Wilkins, Director of the Department of Modern Languages in the New York high schools, has given to spreading this use of "talkies." Last fall a series of central Saturday morning showings for New York students was initiated by Dr. Wilkins, in cooperation with the International Cinema League. The films, chosen by a committee appointed by Dr. Wilkins, included original European talking pictures in French, German and Spanish. Before the actual showings, a synopsis of the plot and short lists of important idiomatic expressions in the film, were issued to the students in mimeographed form. Extra credit was granted for essays on the film that were written voluntarily by students who attended the performance.

The showings in New York started with a German picture called *Emil und die Detektive*, a Tom Sawyerish story of a German boy's first trip to Berlin, shown together with two travel pictures of Germany. We expected about four or five hundred students for our first showing of *Le Bal*,

in French, with travelogues of France, over five thousand students applied and approximately thirty-six hundred actually came. Two performances were necessary. Despite the advent of midterm examinations, we expected about twelve hundred students for the next showing, of a Spanish film made in Barcelona, called *La Cancion del Dia*, but the response was again larger, nineteen hundred students attending.

In subsequent performances, an effort was made to hold showings in key high school auditoriums throughout the city, instead of one central theatre, in order to lower the price of admission, which expenses had kept at twenty cents, and to eliminate carfare for students. This project was found impractical, due to poor neighborhood transportation and the wide separation of schools. But by showing in one central high school, rather than a theatre, expenses were lowered sufficiently to reduce the admission price to fifteen cents. The obtaining of satisfactory portable projection equipment has been a problem, but fair results have been obtained and every effort is being made to improve on them.

On the whole the use of foreign talking films in correlation with language instruction has revealed almost innumerable possibilities, whose exploitation is still in an experimental stage. As Dr. Wilkins has advanced their use in high school instruction, so a growing movement to adopt them among colleges has been fostered by the University Film Foundation at Harvard. Despite most adverse budget conditions the use of French and German talking films has spread to over thirty universities in the East alone, during the past three years. Up to the present moment there have not been enough films of the highest calibre available to meet the demand. The International Cinema League, which makes available to schools, colleges and clubs, over 95% of the European films in this country, is seeking to meet the problem, arranging direct contacts with foreign educational institutes and film producers. Conducted on a non-profit

basis, the League acts as motion picture representative for many schools selecting films for their purposes.

While foreign talking pictures have proven exceptionally valuable in conveying the actually spoken language and accent, our experience has been that they are even more effective in other respects. Their influence is to project the actual knowledge of a language into use after the school course is finished. By affording a pleasant contact with the country studied, during the mastering of the language, they impel the student to keep his control of the language by attending foreign films purely for pleasure.

Thus by giving the student pleasant and educational associations with the foreign country itself, foreign sound films serve the basic purposes of language instruction.

HOLLYWOOD'S cosmopolitanism has been statistically revealed as the result of a survey just completed showing the number of foreign-language-speaking players available to motion picture studios. Out of a total of 3,761 artists, ranging from stars to bit players the survey shows that 1,031 are linguists in one or more languages other than English. Many of them who a few years ago were in constant demand for foreign versions, now play small parts in American productions solely because they are "types." Others are engaged to speak a few lines of their native language in brief scenes.

Studio casting directors maintain elaborate filing indexes so that these artists may be found without delay. Their records disclose that of the foreign groups, those speaking French lead all others, with Spanish-speaking players a close second. There are 317 French speaking actors and actresses registered in the office of the casting director at the Paramount studios. Actors speaking Spanish total 302 and German lin-

(Continued on page 15)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Zoo in Budapest

Written by Melville Baker and Jack Kirkland, directed by Rowland V. Lee, photographed by Lee Garmes, music by Louis de Francesco, produced by Jesse L. Lasky, distributed by Fox Film Corporation.

The Cast

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Zani | Gene Raymond |
| Eve | Loretta Young |
| Dr. Grunbaum | O. P. Heggie |
| Paul Vador | Wally Albright |
| Heinie | Paul Fix |
| Garbosh | Murray Kinnel |
| Katrina | Ruth Warren |
| Elsie | Frances Rich |
| Mr. Vador | Niles Welch |

THIS picture will be a gentle surprise to anyone with only the title to guide his expectations. Animals are of course suggested, particularly in these days when beasts in jungles or cages are having their special turn at a cycle; but nothing to prepare you for the quiet and individual charm you soon almost imperceptibly find yourself aware of, which grows and fills the picture, and which is not easy to describe. It seems to be compounded of things like simplicity and humaneness and sympathetic photography. The subtle but unmistakable air of foreignness—helped but by no means entirely created by occasional glimpses of Hungarian signs and costumes—sets everything apart in a storybook land where simple things seem the most natural things, a sort of latter-day Garden of Eden without a final wrath and suffering to break it up.

It is an idyllic place, this zoo, shut off from the world, though the world invades it daily in a horde of visitors. In it vices and virtues appear in their simplest terms—an elephant is an elephant, a hyena a hyena, a tiger a tiger, and human beings characterize themselves with equal simplicity. Though the wild creatures no longer have their natural freedom they no longer have to battle for existence, but are cared for with kindness and understanding. Disturbances come only from outside, or from human traits that seem to belong more to the outside world than to its secluded, kindly atmosphere.

The story weaves itself together gradually, gathering its threads in leisurely fashion, drawing them into the pattern of a drama that quickens its pace as it becomes more definite, till in the end it is swift and absorbing and exciting. Three people are most involved: a young fellow who has grown up in the zoo, a girl who has grown up in a severely regimented orphan asylum, a little boy who lives in a nice home under a fretful nurse. The zoo is the place of happiness for all these three, and the ways of life outside the zoo are a conspiracy against them. Zani, whose whole existence has been spent among the animals, gets into trouble because he cannot bear to see women wearing furs for which animals have been killed—he always steals them, and there is a law of the outer world to reach in and punish him. The girl, picked to be

BULLETIN

1933

Exceptional
Cavaleade
Hell on Earth
Ivan
M
Topaze
Zoo in Budapest

Honorable Mention
Der Hauptmann von
Koepenick
Hertha's Erwachen



The flight through the marsh in "Zoo in Budapest"

bound out to tannery labor on her eighteenth birthday, escapes from the band of orphans being herded through the zoo on an educational outing and is hiding among the marsh rushes when time comes to close the gates for the night. The little boy, cheated of his promised ride on the elephant, manages to elude his nurse and scurry under the turnstile while the last visitors are leaving. And night comes with these three fugitives hiding.

Here comes as lovely a nocturne as the screen has ever shown—evening drawing over the zoo, the beasts, all quiet and content now that bothersome visitors are gone, subsiding into slumber, the water-birds seeking their sleeping places, the runaways hiding in the dusk like frightened animals, Zani alert and soft-footed like some night prowler of the woods, all caught in pictures that move like music, weaving a mood of night-fall and hushed nature-sounds.

The peace is soon shattered by the search for the fugitives, and before its steadily mounting tension is resolved there has been a gamut of perils, in which the tiger, accidentally freed from his cage, spreads terror among the other animals and the uneasy elephants nearly wreck the building and the small boy has to be rescued from mortal danger.

The chase and the perils are ancient movie stuff, the oldest and staunchest basis for cinema thrills, but here they are logical to the story and projected with a freshness that is as good as novelty. They are in key with the characters and the atmosphere, and it is the characters and atmosphere that give this film its distinction.

Everyone who had a hand in this picture seems to have been an expert—even a creative expert. The scenario is built with unusual skill, the actors are chosen with remarkable felicity, and they act with a life-

likeness that makes you remember them, for instance, as Zani and the orphan girl rather than as Gene Raymond and Loretta Young. Lee Garmes has photographed the picture with memorable beauty, and behind it all is the sure and effective directorial hand of Rowland V. Lee. The whole thing is unique in its charm, and leaves a pleasing warmth in the memory.—J. S. H.

Hertha's Erwachen

(Hertha's Awakening)

Written by Hertha von Gephardt, directed by Gerhard Lamprecht, photographed by Karl Haeschmann, produced by UFA, distributed by Protex Pictures.

The Cast

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Karl Christians..... | Hans Brausewetter |
| Herr Barthels..... | Erwin Kalsch |
| Hertha..... | Toni van Eyck |
| Gertrude..... | Ruth Hellberg |
| Gertrude's mother..... | Elsa Wagner |
| Herr Haber..... | Fritz Odemar |
| Fräulein Berghuhn..... | Hedwig Schlichter |
| Old Schultheiss..... | Eduard Rothauser |

FILM audiences, trained since their youth to respond to the rhythm of cowboys and Indians, of hoof-beats and six-shooters, audiences accustomed in more recent times to vigorous presentations of gangsters, rackets, neurotics and chain-gangs, will likely find *Hertha's Erwachen* a strangely quiet movie, strange with that quietude one rarely experiences in films here. There is nothing new in either the story or the treatment. The film merely permits you to eavesdrop on human beings for a little while and notice how they act and feel at a moment in their lives.

The story is one of the oldest. In a small town in Germany a motherless girl lives with her father, a studious old bookdealer. Her suitor is one of those small town "eligible bachelors," a pompous and uncomprehending man. At Carnival time a young dry-goods salesman from Berlin, making his rounds, stops off at the town and is delayed there for a day or two. The girl meets him, and falls in love. After the festival, he goes on his way, promising to write her from Berlin.

Home again, he loses his job, searches for another, puts off writing. When the girl later learns that she is to bear a child, and her anguished letters are returned by the boy's firm marked "address unknown," she is panic-stricken, afraid to shame her father and herself. She goes to a woman who, the village gossip tells her, can "fix it up" all right; but she cannot bring herself to take that way out. First the town and then the father learn from the gossip of the girl's predicament. Turned out of the house, she is taken in by a gruff old friend who announces proudly and defiantly that the baby will be born under his roof. Her chum goes to Berlin, where she finally succeeds in finding the young man, still unaware of all this, and he arrives at the girl's side shortly after his son.

For anything as simple and personal as this, one turns most naturally to *Mädchen in Uniform*, that equally hushed and moving story of life in a sternly-disciplined Prussian girl's school. *Hertha's Erwachen* is not so skilfully contrived, nor is its theme so unusual or so intense, but within its limits it is a sister to the other film. To a remarkable degree it gives the impression of life observed rather than contrived; its drama is personal, and springs out of character. Its people are real human beings, caught by an unobtrusive camera in a few moments of joy and suffering. Existence has not halted all around them while their own story unfolded; on the contrary, one gets a strong feeling of the life of a little town surrounding and permeating all these people.

Like *Mädchen*, too, this is a film whose actors seem not so much movie players as actual participants in an actual occurrence. The young girl who plays Hertha is another *mädchen*, one of many similar girls in many similar towns, but she has the unique gift of being able to project that person, wholly and sympathetically. With all the rôles it is the same—the young salesman is honestly portrayed, even the father is an understandable human rather than the stock finger-pointer

(Continued on page 15)

Book Reviews

THE Encyclopedia Britannica publishers have issued several booklets, as they call them, containing selections on related subjects from their fourteenth edition. This volume, of nearly a hundred pages, contains articles on the theatre, motion pictures, stage design, acting, the dance, make-up, costume design, pantomime, masks, and other matters of a similar nature.

Under motion pictures, Terry Ramsaye gives an abbreviation of his important two-volume, "A Million and One Nights," so short that it does little but create an appetite for more. Production, sets, acting, direction, make-up, are assigned to such successful participants in the film industry as Jesse L. Lasky, Cedric Gibbons, Milton Sills, Cecil B. DeMille and Lon Chaney. Much of the material in their articles is informational (though largely confined to the now fairly obsolete silent film), some of it merely personal opinion. Miss Lillian Gish has a little essay called "A Universal Language," built on the theme "a laugh or a sob is the same the world over." At the end is a half page or so on sound motion pictures.

So far as motion pictures are concerned, this volume will be useful for people who want a little quick and easy information on the more obvious phases of film making. The really studious enthusiast will note with surprise a statement in the introduction that Mary Pickford's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* constituted one of the most important steps in advancement; will shudder slightly to find *Aloma of the South Seas* confused with Flaherty's *Moana*; reach for a Lucky in the midst of Miss Gish's dissertation; and look in vain for any intelligent critical discussion of what the motion picture is, how it came to be what it is, or what it might be.

INSTRUCTIONAL films in natural science, animal life, social science, music, mathematics, vocational guidance and teacher training are listed in the new catalog of

ARE you planning thematic programs for your junior matinees next season? If so you will want to be informed about all the holidays and special observance dates for your film tie-up programs. We learned recently of a volume, not new by any means, but new to us, entitled "American Anniversaries" compiled by Philip Robert Dillon, writer and journalist. It presents seven hundred and fifty events in United States history. In fact every day in the year has some special historical significance so that programs could be arranged linking the various days in one week-end program or different days could be observed on different years. The scientific and chronological presentation of the material adds to its informative value and the book can be recommended to those in Better Films Councils and other groups who like to build their junior programs around a related important event.

THE fifteenth edition of the Film Year Book published annually by the Film Daily, has made its appearance. It contains more than a thousand pages of motion picture information and is a reliable ready reference book when in need of data on films, film activity and film personalities. If the reader seeks up-to-date material he will find it, as for example in the reviews of all 1932 film activities, if he seeks historical material he will find that, for example in the listing of 13,262 motion picture titles, covering pictures from 1915 to 1932, if he seeks statistical information that also is abundantly supplied. For buyer, seller, exhibitor, student and patron of the motion picture there is something in this encyclopedic volume.

the Electrical Research Products, Inc. These films, mostly of one reel each, are available on both 35mm. and 16mm. safety stock. The 35mm. subjects are sound-on-film, the 16mm. sound-on-disc. Information regarding rentals, et cetera, can be learned from the Electrical Research Products, Inc., 250 West 57th Street, New York City.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

A BEDTIME STORY—From the novel by Roy Horniman, directed by Norman Taurog, with a cast including Maurice Chevalier, Baby LeRoy and Edward Everett Horton. Paramount, 9 reels. The always charming Chevalier shows another side of his versatile talent—this time as the foster father of an infant. The baby is most appealing and Edward Everett Horton as the valet adds greatly to the comedy. *Family audience.*

BELOW THE SEA—Screen story by Jo Swerling, directed by Albert Rogell, with a cast including Ralph Bellamy and Fay Wray. Columbia, 8 reels. An expedition to recover sunken gold, under the guise of a scientific expedition. Unusual in story and particularly so in a lot of the excellent undersea action. *Family audience.*

BLACK BEAUTY—From the novel by Anna Sewell, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast including Alexander Kirkland and Esther Ralston. Monogram, 6 reels. The adventures of Black Beauty, a thoroughbred horse and his master. Though parted when adversity comes, they are happily reunited. A good picture for humane programs. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CENTRAL AIRPORT—From the story "Hawk's Mate" by Jack Moffitt, directed by William A. Wellman, with a cast including Richard Barthelmess, Sally Eilers and Tom Brown. First National, 7 reels. Two brothers in love with the same girl. Some good flying and an unusual rescue supplies an exciting climax. *Family audience.*

THE CIRCUS QUEEN MURDER—From the Liberty Magazine serial by Anthony Abbott, directed by Roy William Neill, with a cast including Adolphe Menjou, Greta Nissen and Donald Cook. Columbia, 7 reels. Thatcher Colt, police commissioner, goes for a holiday to a small town to find peace and quiet but instead he finds a mystery to solve—the murder of the queen of the circus that is playing there. *Family audience.*

CROSS FIRE—Screen story by Harold Shumate, directed by Otto Brower, with a cast headed by Tom Keene, RKO-Radio, 7 reels. A Western without an oppressed heroine or cattle rustlers or a plot to steal the ranch. Good action, and Edgar Kennedy stealing the picture with his comedy. *Family audience.*

THE DEVIL'S BROTHER—From the operetta "Fra Diavolo" by Daniel F. E. Auber, directed by Hal Roach, with a cast including Dennis King and Laurel and Hardy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. The hundred year old operetta "Fra Diavolo" reproduced with much of its original charm, and such additions as are supplied by Dennis King's voice and the antics of Laurel and Hardy. Much more leisurely than modern musical shows. *Family audience.*

ELMER THE GREAT—From the play by Ring Lardner and George M. Cohan, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, with a cast headed by Joe E. Brown. First National, 7 reels. The difficulties of managing a dumb but temperamental ball-player who is a star in his line. Joe E. Brown clowns less than usual and gives a real characterization. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE FIGHTING PRESIDENT—Universal, 6 reels. An interesting compilation of newsreels showing Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his years of public life, with Edwin C. Hill supplying the comments throughout the film. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*

KADETTEN (Cadets)—From the novel by Peter Muss, directed by George Jacoby, with a cast including Fritz Fiedler, Albert Basserman and Trude von Malo. Film Exchange, 8 reels. A boy in a German military academy who chivalrously tries to stop a scandal about his father's

young second wife barely escapes tragedy. Very interesting, done with sympathy and excellent feeling. *Mature audience.*

LOOKING FORWARD—From the novel "Service" by C. L. Anthony, directed by Clarence Brown, with a cast including Lewis Stone, Lionel Barrymore and Elizabeth Allan. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. How a big department store weathered the depression, with a rainbow at the end. English in setting, with a distinct resemblance to Galsworthy, it is intelligent and pleasant, with Lionel Barrymore in the sort of part in which he is best. *Family audience.*

LUCKY DOG—Screen story and direction by Z. Myers, with a cast including Chic Sales and Buster the dog. Universal, 7 reels. A story of a dog's love for his master. Rather slow moving but selected because of its appeal to animal lovers and its suitability for humane programs. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MADE ON BROADWAY—From the story "Public Relations" by Courtney Terrett, directed by Harry Beaumont, with a cast including Robert Montgomery, Sally Eilers and Madge Evans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 7 reels. A comedy romance of a successful publicity man, and how he made a success of a girl who turned out to be not worth it. Thin but entertaining, with a bright characterization in Robert Montgomery's individual line. *Mature audience.*

THE PHANTOM BROADCAST—Screen story by Tristram Tupper, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast including Ralph Forbes and Vivienne Osborne. Monogram, 6 reels. A rather novel story, with some surprises in its plot, of a radio singer and a gang plotting to make a racket of radio talent. Ralph Forbes gives an excellent performance in an unusual character. *Family audience.*

THE PICTURE SNATCHER—Screen story by Danny Ahearn, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with a cast headed by James Cagney. Warner, 7 reels. A young fellow just out of Sing Sing gets a job as a photographer of difficult news scenes for a scandal sheet, and later becomes involved in gangster melodrama. Cagney gives an excellent characterization, though the story does not amount to much except to be very tough. *Mature audience.*

SONG OF THE EAGLE—Screen story by Gene Towne and Graham Baker, directed by Ralph Murray, with a cast including Charles Bickford, Richard Arlen, and Jean Hersholt. Paramount, 8 reels. An interesting and highly entertaining picture of the struggle for existence of Otto Hoffman after his brewery has been shut down after the World War, his persistent fight not to break the law and his reward in 1933. The topic is a most timely one showing the fight between the racketeers and the legitimate brew-

ers and how the problem was solved. *Family audience.*

SUPERNATURAL—From the story by Garnett Weston, directed by Victor Halperin, with a cast including Carole Lombard, Randolph Scott and Vivienne Osborne. Paramount, 7 reels. The evil spirit of a murderess who has been electrocuted enters the body of a wealthy young girl who has lost her brother. His spirit finally guides her from harm. The picture is interesting and well produced and the fantastic idea is cleverly worked out. *Mature audience.*

TODAY WE LIVE—Story "Turn About" by William Faulkner, directed by Howard Hawks, with a cast including Gary Cooper, Joan Crawford, Robert Young and Franchot Tone. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 11 reels. William Faulkner's first film story is about the war, contrasting the types of heroism in an American and an Englishman. Joan Crawford rather submerged by men and fighting, and the most interesting and moving parts concern the men. *Mature audience.*

TRICK FOR TRICK—Screen story by Vivian Cosley, Shirley Warde and Harry W. Gribble, directed by Hamilton McFadden, with a cast including Ralph Morgan, Victor Jory and Sally Blane. Fox, 7 reels. Two rival magicians mixed up in a murder mystery. An entertaining combination of melodrama and farce, which merge so closely that laughs and thrills go practically together. *Family audience.*

UNKNOWN VALLEY—Screen story and direction by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. Columbia, 7 reels. A Western melodrama with a novel setting in a secluded colony of a peculiar religious sect. Interesting and exciting. *Family audience.*

THE WOMAN I STOLE—From the novel "Tampico" by Joseph Hergesheimer, directed by Irving Cummings, with a cast including Jack Holt, Fay Wray and Donald Cook. Columbia, 7 reels. Hergesheimer's Mexican story transferred to oil fields in Africa, where two men get to be friends through bitter rivalry for a woman not worth it. Jack Holt good as usual in a typical role. *Mature audience.*

WORKING MAN—From the story by Edgar Franklin, directed by John G. Adolph, with a cast headed by George Arliss. Warner, 7 reels. Arliss as a shoe manufacturer who for the sake of an old love puts a rival's business on its feet again. Excellent entertainment of the characteristic Arliss type, with a shrewd, humorous and kindly part for the star. *Family audience.*

WORLD GONE MAD—Screen story by Edward T. Lowe, directed by Christy Cabanne, with a cast including Pat O'Brien and Evelyn Brent. Majestic, 8 reels. The story of a newspaper reporter who turns detective. Melodrama about villainous high finance that has its exciting moments. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Zoo in Budapest—8 rls.

Family audience. Junior matinee—(see page 9)

Hertha's Erwachen—9 rls.

Mature audience—(see page 11)

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

INFORMATIONALS

- BALANCE (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Ski jumping, acrobatics, etc., Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
- *BROADWAY BY DAY (Magic Carpet Series)—Fascinating picture of the famous street. Fox. *Family audience.*
- DAUGHTERS OF THE SEA (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
- FISHERMAN'S HOLIDAY—Catching and canning tuna fish. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- A GONDOLA JOURNEY (Magic Carpet Series)—Venice. Fox. *Family audience.*
- THE GRIP (How to Break 90 Series)—The first in a new Bobby Jones golf serial. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 11—Paramount. *Family audience.*
- THE ICEBERG PATROL (Magic Carpet Series)—How transatlantic ships are protected from icebergs. Fox. *Family audience.*
- INKLINGS—Drawings of Catherine the Great, Plato and others. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- ISLES OF THE EAST INDIES (Magic Carpet Series)—Life among the Malays and Javanese. Fox. *Family audience.*
- JABS AND JOLTS (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Dempsey explains the art of wrestling. Paramount. *Family audience.*
- PARADES OF YESTERDAY—Old newsreels. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 11—Paramount. *Family audience.*
- PATHE REVIEW NO. 5—RKO-Radio. *Family audience.*
- PIRATES OF THE DEEP (Naturgraphs)—Hermit crabs, starfish, Portuguese man o' war. Educational. *Family audience.*
- SAMPANS AND SHADOWS (Magic Carpet Series)—Waterways of China. Fox. *Family audience.*
- SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 12—Paramount. *Family audience.*
- STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 28—Universal. *Family audience.*
- STRANGE CEREMONIES OF THE WORLD (Newman World Travel Talks)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- THROTTLE PUSHERS (Sports Champions Series)—Automobile racing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SERIALS AND SKITS

- THE BARGAIN OF THE CENTURY—Zasu Pitts and Thelma Todd. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
- MUSH AND MILK—Our Gang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
- MY PAL THE PRINCE—Morton Downey. Universal, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
- NOTHING EVER HAPPENS—Burlesque of *Grand Hotel*. Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
- PLEASURE ISLAND—Technicolor comedy with music. Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
- RAMBLING ROUND RADIO ROW NO. 6—Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, Pickens Sisters, etc. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- THE STRANGE CASE OF POISON IVY—Satire on old melodrama. Columbia, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
- THE THREE MUSKETEERS (serial)—Episodes Nos. 1-6. John Wayne, Ruth Hall and Jack Mulhall. The adventures of a young American in North Africa. Mascot, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE WAY OF ALL FRESHMEN—Hal LeRoy and Mitzi Mayfair. Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

YOUR TECHNOCRACY AND MINE—Robert Benchley amusingly makes technocracy more confusing. Universal. *Family audience.*

CARTOONS

- BOSKO'S KNIGHT MARE (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- BOSKO'S WOODLAND DAZE (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
- THE BROADWAY MALADY (Krazy Kat)—Columbia. *Family audience.*
- BUNNIES AND BONNETS (Krazy Kat)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
- GOING TO BLAZES (Lucky Rabbit)—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
- *THE PIRATE SHIP (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience.*
- YE OLDEN DAYS (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

Hertha's Erwachen

(Continued from page 11)

he might easily have become. One of the film's most moving moments is the one in which, alone, he sobs brokenly over his daughter's "shame."

It is an old point that *Hertha's Erwachen* illustrates—*Mädchen in Uniform* and, in slightly different degree, *Zoo in Budapest* prove it, too—that simple things are still vital things, that a story may be both trite and true. And the willingness to do simple things quietly may well be an attitude the cinema can use.

J. A. T.

(Continued from page 8)

guists total 258. The Italian group comes fourth with an even 50. There are only 18 Russians listed in the foreign group but others are available from the "Little Russia" colony in Los Angeles. The same procedure is followed when large numbers of Oriental players are needed, casting office scouts scouring the Chinese and Japanese quarters for types. Only six Japanese and five Chinese are listed in the studio directory. In many cases the foreign players are employed because they are good physical types rather than because of their ability to speak a foreign language.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
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To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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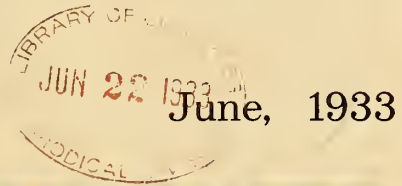
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VIII, No. 6



June, 1933



The mother and son in "Poil de Carotte" (see page 9)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through cooperation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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The Child As Part of the Cinema Audience

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

Last month we presented under the title "The Ritual of the Movies" the first part of the address given by Mr. Potamkin, of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, at the National Board Conference. The following article presents the second part of the address.

SINCE the film club, as a force in audience building, is in principle educational it is related to the problem of the child and the cinema. But this problem of the child and the cinema is not a problem in itself; it is only one of the problems of the child in relation to society.

We cannot hope to solve the problem of the child and the motion until we solve the problem of the child and society, until there are fundamental changes in society in relation to the child, and, of course, the major change we have to make is to break down the wall of ambiguity and hypocrisy that exists between society and the child. We do not want children to see certain things in the movies, but what are we doing about those things in society? The movie is nothing but a reflection of society.

For five years I was director of a children's play village in Philadelphia, a very interesting experiment. It was in the very worst section of Philadelphia, the worst slums, the red light district, the center of the dope industry of America, in the hooch neighborhood, where I have seen many a man go blind in the early days of prohibition. These children were (and still are, I assume) very sophisticated in their knowl-

edge of vice. That does not mean, however, they were not still children, because a child does not anticipate his experience. The child only knows what he experiences, and while he may be abnormal or adult in certain things, he is still a child in other ways.

Into this work I took my own principle, which is that everything in education begins with the child. You do not begin with "Ivanhoe"; you begin with the child and you bring "Ivanhoe" in in relation to the child. And one of the experiences of the child, the most intimate one perhaps of all his experiences, is the motion picture. I used to start with the motion picture and the comic supplement of the Sunday paper. And I did not care how bad they were. There were some objections, but I said, "This is the beginning. We are not going to start by asking the child to make wedges for rattling windows, about which he doesn't care in the least. We are going to start with the thing the child cares most about." We began and I learned many things about the child and the movie. For instance, I learned that what we think a child ought to like is not what the child likes. That is very obvious, nevertheless it had to be learned.

Chang, for instance, was a very fine picture. Ordinarily we would say children would like it. The children I have met with were rather representative, they came from various nationalities, various age groups, from different levels of life—that is, they



Harry Alan Potamkin

Photograph by Irving Lerner

thing intrinsic in child psychology, but the influence of having seen certain actors in single type roles all the time. And there were other incidental reasons.

When I spoke about Chaplin I said, "I like him." They said, "You are silly. He is so silly, so foolish." They became my superiors, my grownups. I said, "Whom do you like?" Harold Lloyd was the child's comedian. Film after film we discussed, and they liked those films which we consider films not for children.

The point I want to make is that we have got to study the child and not the motion picture first if we are going to know the relation of the film to the child, and I do not think we can do it by surveys only, because something happens to the child when he answers ques-

came from the pauperized class, from the unskilled laboring, the skilled laboring, or from families of storekeepers in the neighborhood—and I found the children did not like *Chang*. I wanted to know why.

Well, first, "It is just an animal picture." That is funny, they did not like an animal picture. Maybe it was because they lived in close areas and animals became something they had to kick around. There are multitudes of such children in this country and they are increased as conditions get worse.

They did not like *Chang* because there was no central hero that they could recognize; they did not recognize their stars. That is an influence of the ritual. It is not some-

things on paper. When there is no intimate responsible relationship between him and the questioner he often becomes a liar. Even though it may not be in the schoolroom, he rather likes to answer as he would like to think you would want him to answer. There is something the matter with an educational system that makes children that way, but it is so. You get such answers—I know, I have gone to school; I know I have answered in college papers according to the professor because it meant a good mark. English was always my good subject and I always got a very high mark. My only low mark, a mark that was below what I ex-

pected in English, that I ever received was from a professor who took off a number of points because I did not put in everything he had said in his lectures on that particular subject. I had my doubts about them so I left them out. He did not like that, so he marked me down. That happens with the younger child even more so; he is less assertive.

The only thing I can say is that only through the most intimate relationships with the child, where the child feels a real faithful relationship—that he will not be betrayed by the questioner, that he does not have to hide something—is it possible to get to the child, and it was possible in this play village institution where I taught because the child did not have to come to it. He came after school hours as a relief from school; in fact, he was wilder than ever because he came from school where he had been held in check. We would get not only honest objections, but sardonic and cynical, his angriest reactions even at times; and there I came to these conclusions:

I said you cannot solve the problem of the child in relation to the film unless you solve his problem in relation to society. We are not going to solve that problem very soon. There are fundamental changes necessary before that problem is solved. The only way I can see it is again through certain educational means.

It is pretty well agreed that the motion picture is a pedagogical instrument. I do not have to discuss the merely mechanical aid that the movie can supply to the instructions of the teacher. I am thinking now of the movie *per se* as a subject, and for some five years now I have been urging that the motion picture be incorporated as a subject in schools—that is, in two ways: first, as a manual art, where a child can understand how a motion picture is made, and even make films; and secondly, as a course in current topics, whatever title is given to such subjects in schools.

I do not stress as yet the aesthetic because children do not begin by being aesthetic in their reactions. For instance, in relation to verse, they begin by reacting to sounds. They take my first name and they say, "Harry ka-Parry." I have objected, for instance, to Hughes Mearns' work with children, where Hughes Mearns wants to destroy the verbal cliché. I say let the child have his clichés of language. The child *should* say "white as snow." What do you want him to say? Why shouldn't he use clichés when he is 10 or 12? Is it better that he should have clichés of attitudes and language affectations than those elementary clichés? When a young child says, "The moon was a battered dishpan" it may sound very unusual, but to me it is very definitely a cliché of attitude; it is a borrowing from certain types of modernistic verse which no more belongs to the child than other experiences that are remote from him. Let him like these stereotype things, but let him understand gradually. Teach him what is the mechanism of his reaction, and that can be done, I think, in two ways in a movie. Let him study; let him be taught how to make movies. Why should he be taught how to hammer horse shoes when we do not have horses any more and not taught the movies which are so much a part of his life?

In my own work with the children I did this: they were going to see a film, *Camille*, with Norma Talmadge. I did not say to them, "Don't go to see that picture," because I knew they would go anyhow, even if they had to sneak in. So in advance of the film I said, "Look in the picture. You will see two things are going to be done." For instance, there was one scene where Fred Niblo used stationary photographs for his effect. I said, "Look for that. Then you will see in the picture also, instead of having a man go through all the details of taking off his clothes and putting on his clothes, they

simply have him go this far with his jacket and then go on," which was one of the first attempts at eliminating the unnecessary transitions.

They went to see *Camille* and I asked them how they liked it. Many of them had not seen the picture because they were looking for effects, but in looking for these technical things their pleasure was enhanced through their particular experience at the motion picture theatre that day, without accentuating the sexual suggestion.

In the social treatment the method to pursue is to have the child relate, with assistance from the teacher, the fancies of a film to the facts of his own experience. What does he see in the picture? Can he extract from the film the truth or the falsehood? I think that can be taught.

We know that children have grown up with the films. In growing up with films there has been developed the individual who is movie conscious. That is to say, there are many, many young people who want to make films, and I am not thinking of the children who want to be Greta Garbos or Clark Gables, I am thinking of those children who really want to make pictures, who are not concerned about monetary rewards, but just as there has been a desire to write, to paint, there are many, many people who want to make pictures, want to direct, want to act, want to write scenarios. There is no provision made in our society to instruct these young people. Well, they are going to take care of themselves until such a thing takes place; they are going to form amateur groups, which at present are a bad imitation of Hollywood. Or, there is an organization which perhaps has a firmer base, the Workers' Film and Photo League where young men and women go out and make records of labor events. They are not remarkable works of art, but I think they are important as beginnings.

What are we going to do for these

movie-minded young people? We must establish out of this whole educational pattern from the early days, a program by which they are taught movies in the manual arts and movies in the social subjects. Gradually they will take the movie up in its refinements of art and then they will be taught direction. There must be established universities of the cinema. The only ones of the kind that I know of today are in the Soviet. There they found it necessary to make the movie organic with their life, and to stimulate a sure, steady flow of new talents into the production.

Today the young man who wants to make films, or young woman—young women especially, there is only one female director in Hollywood, Dorothy Arzner—cannot reach Hollywood. Some of them are too sensitive to pull the necessary strings; some of them do not have family connections, and they are having a drive to get in. Hollywood is so far away. But shall they be kept down? There must be a way provided. Several months ago I drew up a tentative plan for such a possible system where degrees will be given so that the parents may be satisfied that the children who go to the school of cinema may get an A.B. degree; may even get a Ph.D. The school will teach not only the motion picture, it will teach also the necessary subjects of history, history of the motion picture, the fine arts, aesthetics, sociology, languages.

I will give you an instance of the University of Cinema in Moscow. There they teach cameramen chemistry, physics, and they teach German as the language; to the directorial students they teach English as the language because they believe that American direction has offered more in the way of direction than foreign. They teach English, the history of art, economics, sociology and scenario writing.

Now, with the establishment of such courses we may have a center for those

(Continued on page 8)

Creating Motion Picture Departments in Museums of Art

By ALAN R. BLACKBURN, JR.

The following article records the address delivered at the National Board Annual Conference by Mr. Alan R. Blackburn, Jr., Executive Secretary of the Museum of Modern Art, giving the purpose and plan of the Museum in introducing the motion picture into its program of activity.

WHEN the Museum of Modern Art was first asked to speak here we consented with some misgivings, because we have not, as yet, a motion picture department. But we have been studying for a motion picture department, looking over the field. We have been doing this intensively for the past seven months.

Motion pictures have been a part of the museum's program ever since its founding, and I think it well, even though it is still only a plan, to tell you what tack we are taking to form a department of motion pictures. We wanted to study very carefully before actually organizing.

I see that the keynote of the Conference is "analysis of appreciation as applied to motion pictures." As a museum and as a modern museum we are very, very much interested in appreciation and the reactions of the public. In fact, it is one of our chief concerns. I feel that sometimes people do not understand things because both sides are not thoroughly informed.

An incident came up when we moved into our new building last April. We had called in a mechanic to repair the spring on one of the elevator doors. After the job was done he called us down to look it over. We did not think that the spring was working perfectly and told him so. It happened that the door was in one of the galleries where pieces of sculpture were standing, some of them without arms. So he looked at us and looked at the statues and said "Well, you people don't seem to do your work very thoroughly around here either." The point is, if we both had had time he could probably have explained to us why the spring

wasn't working perfectly, and we could have explained to him why our statues were the way they were.

Now, we feel about paintings, with which we have had our chief experience, that the public is just as important as the artist. It is a theme that runs all through the museum, because artists cannot produce in a vacuum, artists of any kind; they simply have to have an audience, and the more informed and more intelligent that audience is, the better the artist and the better the work he is going to produce. We think this is a very logical proposition. Therefore, every effort that is made to increase the interest of the public and to increase their ability to criticize constructively, the better product you are going to have.

It is just as much the responsibility of the public to have a fine national art in every department as it is that of the artist. I do not think the public has any business to sit back and say "Well, now, artist, show us what you can do. If you happen to turn out something, and we hear of it, maybe we'll come and see it sometime. We are not very much interested anyway." During the great periods of art the artist has been inspired, if not by the enthusiasm of the entire public, certainly by a large majority of the people who really felt concerned about his work.

Now we are going about motion pictures in just exactly the same way as we have gone about our pictures. Because we put a picture on our walls we do not say it is good. We put it there and say "We are making up our minds about this picture. We hope that you make up your minds, too." That is, in a general way, what we propose to do with motion pictures. We would show them to the people, we would give all the facts that we could about motion pictures in an absolutely impartial way. We would not cut our pictures from any angle unless it was

from the angle of being too long. We would rather censor their selection.

Our largest problem in motion pictures is in their presentation. You can hang a picture on the wall and you can ship it around the country, but how are you going to show motion pictures?

There are four points to our program:

1. The actual showing of motion pictures to an audience. Now, there are a number of societies that have been formed in New York within the last year that are going to do a great service in that regard. They are getting their memberships together and are actually showing pictures. Whether the museum would wish to supplement that service is something we have to decide after we see what is being done in that line.

2. We would like to circulate our knowledge about motion pictures in just the same way that we circulate our pictures all over the country.

3. Then we would like to build up carefully a body of criticism. The whole motion picture field is so large and so tremendous, and there are so many different angles. There is the social angle, and there is the effect on children, the moral angle, the production angle, the finance angle. These considerations have been talked about here this afternoon. The angle that we are particularly interested in, of course, is the art angle.

Often the wrong interpretation is put on what is meant by art in motion pictures. We are not primarily interested in the so-called artistic pictures; we are not primarily interested in "arty" photography. We are interested in the picture you see every time you go to a motion picture house, in the commercial product mainly and chiefly.

4. We want motion pictures to be considered just as much an art of this country as our paintings, our sculptures, our drawings and water colors. They deserve that place in the American national life. You go to a museum and you see paintings, you see sculpture and you even see industrial objects. But motion pictures, I think we can

safely say, have never been considered seriously that way, and they should be. They are the real American art of the past decade, and in the next five years, or certainly ten years, we are going to realize that this is a real art we are producing. When millions and millions of people go to these motion pictures, see them on the screen, are interested in them, certainly such a production as that is art. We aim to place the motion picture on an equal basis with painting and sculpture.

We hope to let this idea spread from our museum, when our department is finally formed, all over the country and to cooperate with all the groups that are interested in motion pictures as a great American art.

Book Review

A question often asked when discussing motion pictures is—What effect do they have on the eyes? There comes an answer to this in a compact fifty page pamphlet entitled "The Visual Fatigue of Motion Pictures."

The publication considers not only the subject of eye strain but other factors in the theatre involved as well, such as ventilation, illumination and seating. Opinions and findings concerning all of these are presented by scores of medical men, engineers and projectionists from universities, hospitals and scientific and technical societies. There is a lengthy bibliography covering material on the subject from 1908 to date, so that much information is made available to the student or group wishing to undertake a study of the physical effect of the films.

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(Continued from page 6)

who have grown up from audience relationships to critical and creative relationships—I give this as a sort of beginning and end for a body that may prove the vanguard for the movie audience.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Poil de Carotte

(The Red Head)

Adapted by Julien Duvivier from the novel by Jules Renard, directed by Julien Duvivier, photographed by Thirard and Monniot, music by Alexander Tansman, produced by Pathe-Nathan, distributed by Harold Auten.

The Cast

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Monsieur Lepic | Harry Baur |
| Madame Lepic | Catherine Fontenoy |
| Poil de Carotte | Robert Lynen |
| Felix Lepic | Simon Aubry |
| Ernestine Lepic | Maxime Fromiot |
| Annette, the maid | Christiane Dor |
| Parrain, the uncle | Louis Gouthier |
| Honorine, the housekeeper | Mme. Marthy |
| Mathilde | Colette Segall |

HERE is a picture founded on a novel that has been popular in France for nearly half a century. It reached this country in its first dramatic form some twenty-five years ago, as a short play called "Carrots," in which Ethel Barrymore acted.

There is a home with three children, one of whom is unloved by his mother and misunderstood by his father. This is the material out of which *Poil de Carotte* is made.

Nothing is shown and nothing is said that does not bring this situation into ever more clear relief, until the sincerity and sureness of the film's progress creates something deeply and rarely affecting. Here is really a moving picture.

The place is a French village. Madame Lepic gives all of her fondness to her two older children

and has nothing but contempt and concealed bitterness for her youngest boy (a freckled lad called "Carrot-head"), because, so the servants and the village say, he was born late, unexpected and unwanted. Monsieur Lepic has long given up talking to her, feels no particular affection for the older boy and girl, and does not realize how much his youngest son wants to love him and hates his mother. The only channels of sympathy open to the boy are the new servant-girl, Annette, and his uncle, Parrain, whom he visits for part of every school vacation, and it is on one of these vacations—so dreaded except for the visit to his uncle—that the action of the film occurs. Once home, he experiences a series of incidents of steadily increasing intensity. One such sequence is unforgettable—a wagon-ride that passes, one after another, scenes of love and affection, driving Poil de Carotte into a frenzy of unhappiness and loneliness. The persecutions and misunderstandings find their climax the day that thefts of money, really stolen by Felix and Ernestine, the older children, are blamed on their small brother. Monsieur Lepic, warned by Annette to be

less blind to the constant state of injustice existing in his home, takes the part of the lonely boy, only to be so excited in the business of being elected mayor that he forgets a promise and lets the child down again into the depths of despair. To the boy this is a worse blow than any of his mother's—the flood of neglect, hate,

BULLETIN

1933

Exceptional
Cavalcade
Hell on Earth
Ivan
M

Morgenrot
Poil de Carotte
Topaze
Zoo in Budapest

Honorable Mention
Der Hauptmann von Koenig
Hertha's Erwachen

loneliness, despair, pours with renewed force over him and from him, driving him to find the only solution of his pain in suicide. The most remarkable thing about this climax of terror and agony is that one feels that it is correct, logical, and one's watching pain derives not so much from shock as it does from a feeling of comprehension and expectedness. The rescue by the father and the concluding sealed friendship between the two, shown with such soaring happiness, gives a pleasure that sends one out of the theatre with a warm personal concern seldom duplicated in the Broadway lobbies.

As to the quality of the film, the atmosphere is perfect but always kept in control and co-ordinated with the theme. The characters of the Lepics and their children are miraculously drawn, but, just as the film is not for a moment a mere atmospheric surface, neither is an actor ever permitted to turn his scene into an acting holiday. Such sensitive scenario and direction as Duvivier has bestowed on his fine film (made by him some years ago as a silent film) could profitably be contrasted to the empty fireworks or lumpy sentiment usually found in the Emotional Department of today's movies. The cameraman and designers are responsible for a material flexibility without which the scenarist-director would have been helpless. Alexander Tansman has contributed a score so faultless in mood and speed that he jumps into the front rank of film-composers along with Shostakovitch, Auric and Eissler. Even the producer—Pathe-Nathan—must be congratulated on the amount of time and care allotted to this single production, which probably did not promise millions and unfortunately will not get the millions it deserves. All in all, it is one of those rare specimens of perfect balance of all elements and ideal collaboration of all workers.

The American showing of the film suffers in one unfortunate respect—the

title which has been supplied for American audiences, *The Red Head*, perhaps designed to attract movie-goers who are looking for something quite different from this simple document of a child's mind, is quite likely to discourage parents, educators and a host of others unless they have received a more personal recommendation as to the subject-matter and worth of the film.—J. L.

Morgenrot

(Dawn)

Adapted from a story by Gerhard Menzel, directed by Gustav Ucicky, photographed by Carl Hoffman, music by Herbert Windt, produced by Gunther Stapenhorst, distributed by Protex.

The Cast

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Frau Liers</i> | <i>Adele Sandrock</i> |
| <i>Captain Liers, her son</i> | <i>Rudolf Forster</i> |
| <i>Lieutenant Fredericks</i> | <i>Fritz Genschow</i> |
| <i>The Mayor</i> | <i>Hans Leibelt</i> |
| <i>Helga, his daughter</i> | <i>Else Knott</i> |
| <i>Gustl Jaul</i> | <i>Paul Westermeier</i> |
| <i>Greta, his wife</i> | <i>Camilla Spira</i> |

MORGENROT—like most films of excellent quality—uses the simplest of structures for its telling. By the growing incandescence of small and human touches its content takes on illumination. Gradually we come to see a pretty full and very moving picture of the experience of a German submersible's crew in the Great War—a picture of the spiritual and emotional existence of these men in their under-sea-boat, and in the town they hail from in relationship to the people there who wait for news of their victories, and their return, their wives, mothers, sweethearts, friends, all of whom participate in the war through this submarine's adventures, hoping and fearing, concerned that all may go well in the perilous mission of the craft. Each time she goes forth the question is, will she come safely back? And steadily this question is revealed in the mind of the Captain and crew. Always it presses on the heart of Frau Liers, the mother of the Captain: she has already lost two sons in the struggle,



A submarine scene in "Morgenrot"

and asks, Why? War is futile, a waste. He answers, Maybe. But I must go, I am committed, it is my duty. . . .

Thus *Morgenrot* is a saga of men's fortitude when set amid stern circumstance the end of which to them may be fear-giving and calamitous. In this circumstance their thoughts go out to one another and to those who wait for them anxiously on shore. Their thoughts are the slender threads reaching out from the steel shell that floats precariously and holds their lives, and that may cease to float at any moment. They have their code—it is the code of naval men the world over. If the trend of the world's thinking makes it old-fashioned for the present, it is not up to the film to say so any more than it is up to the play to state that the dead kings Macbeth saw were only delusions. It is up to the film to give us what is implicit in the nature of those it

selects for its characters. This the film does properly and eloquently—it gives us its characters within their circle, within the ring of war-time psychology, of bitter thought and bitter action. It is singularly without hate; it recognizes that the enemy is in the same boat. In the episode where the armed British decoy flies a neutral flag to lure the German submarine to her destruction, the ruse is taken for granted without rancor by the latter's crew—it is all a part of the desperate game, it is their hard luck. This is one attitude of the film that makes it so real and so moving.

Another is its one toward the townspeople among whom are the cheerers, the acquaintances and relatives of the ship's crew. The mayor is for making ponderous, patriotic speeches every time the boat comes home, the populace are for celebrating in a burst of local pride, the wives think of seeing

their husbands, the girls their sweethearts again while forgetting in the optimism of youth dire possibilities of the next voyage. Frau Liers grieves aloof for the tragedy she sees as only delayed, she has no ardor of patriotism, her wish to keep her last son is greater than any end to be gained by war, it is personal and as selfish. Thus is given the undertone of the drama of those at sea and those on the shore. Back and forth, away from and toward these ties of the land, go and come the crew of the mechanical steel shell that if it floats today may not float tomorrow. Each return is their relief and respite, each leave-taking sobers them with foreboding and unspoken dread. They know what it is. No other film of a submarine boat makes the audience know so well as *Morgenrot*.

No other film gives one so perfectly the sense of what a submarine is like—down to the very sense of being aboard her, or of what life aboard her during warfare is like. First, the mechanical operation of the boat is vividly made clear—the vigilance at the instruments, their precision, the rising and submerging, the loading and firing of torpedo tubes, the preservation of the ship's delicate stability. Then the sensations of those who man her—of, when submerged, the shock and wrack of depth bombs falling near, of the terror of suddenly extinguished lights, of the darkness till the emergencies are turned on, of the moments of suspense waiting for disaster or escape. Then the sights—of the level, washing sea, of the enemy ships steaming into the eye of the periscope—the eye that extends and withdraws, turns about to see, safeguarding the life of the ship, guiding her movements. Then the shots of naval combat, of the cruiser being struck by torpedo, of the charging destroyers—these are absolutely real in their effect, like shots of a newsreel, some of them so authentic it seems they must have been photographed in action. And then the little human world encased with the machinery of the boat—men on a brutal, desperate mission, but simple, under-

standable men—not demons—with hopes and fears and scruples neither hardened out by discipline nor quelled by the nature of what must be done. Only at one point is the credulity strained. When the submarine, badly damaged and out of control, lies at the bottom in some thirty fathoms, the survivors make their way out and to the surface with some sort of life-jackets. With the life-saving devices available in 1914-'18, this method of escape at that depth could not very well have been successful. It spoils a little the feeling of the thing being true. But the determination of the crew to accept death together because there are not enough life-preservers, whatever these were, to go around, will be no strain to the imagination of those who are somewhat familiar with the self-sacrificing spirit abroad at Jutland and in other naval engagements of the Great War.

To those who have no hobby-horse to ride, who prefer to take their films as they take their reading and their art, as something to be moved by and to value for workmanship and effect and human meaning, *Morgenrot* should appeal as fine and praiseworthy. It may be for war or against war, according to the reading. Those who perceive in films a horse to carry some sky-pilot pleading a cause social, political or nationalistic, will fit it with the saddle that most delights them. But it does seem a little odd that this film, so unsparing in showing the unenviable lot of those who serve in submarines in wartime, so realistic in giving details of a business where the hero's brows find their most probable crown in the salt seepage of the sea's bottom, and so penetrating to the inner thought of grim disaster that the crew share in common from lowest to highest, should have been produced in a country and for a population that, were they to go to war again, would likely of naval necessity have to face once more the perils of submarine use. On the face of it *Morgenrot* appears to be a pretty doubtful inducement for enlistment purposes in connection with the submarine service in any country.

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

ADORABLE—Screen story by Paul Frank and Billie Wilder, directed by William Dieterle, with a cast including Janet Gaynor and Henry Garat. Fox, 8 reels. A musical romance of a princess and a lieutenant, handsomely produced with many touches of fantasy. Melodious music and a new romantic hero from Europe. *Family audience.*

ALONE (Odná)—Directed by G. M. Kozintsev and L. Z. Trauberg, with a cast headed by Elena Kuzmina. Amkino, 7 reels. One of the simplest of stories—a Soviet school teacher sacrificing her own comfort and desires to carry the truth into Siberia, and the opposition she encountered there. Beautifully photographed. Its chief interest perhaps is for music lover's because of the special score written by Shostakovich, one of the leading young Soviet composers. *Family audience.*

ANN CARVER'S PROFESSION—From the novel "Rules for Wives" by Robert Riskin, directed by Edward Buzzell, with a cast including Fay Wray and Gene Raymond. Columbia, 7 reels. The story of a young wife who adopts a career and outstrips her husband, but finds she has ruined her happy married life. There are implausible elements in the plot, but it is an interesting illustration of a modern problem. *Family audience.*

THE DUDE BANDIT—Screen story by Jack Natteford, directed by George Melford, with a cast headed by Hoot Gibson. First Division, 7 reels. A Western—about a girl whose ranch is being stolen—which Hoot Gibson makes entertaining by his likeable personality. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE EAGLE AND THE HAWK—Screen story by John Monk Saunders, directed by Stuart Walker, with a cast including Fredric March, Cary Grant and Jack Oakie. Paramount, 8 reels. A war story in which a young American aviator breaks under the strain of having to kill young Germans and the idea of winning medals for bravery when his pals are killed. The picture has some very fine photography, is well directed and holds the interest. *Family audience.*

EMERGENCY CALL—Screen story by John C. Clymer and James Evens, directed by Edward Cahn, with a cast including Bill Boyd, William Gargan and Wynne Gibson. RKO, 7 reels. Brisk melodrama of ambulance chasers and the rackets that endanger hospitals. A young surgeon and an ambulance driver and a nurse bring a racketeer to a violent end. *Family audience.*

THE GIRL IN 419—Story by Jules Furthman, directed by George Sonnes and Alexander Hall, with a cast including James Dunn, David Manners and Gloria Stuart. Paramount, 7 reels. Life in the police department of an emergency hospital where the head surgeon falls in love with a mysterious and beautiful patient whose fate is important to some gangsters. Melodrama, with a good deal of comedy and some hard-boiled local color. *Family audience.*

GUN LAW—Screen story by Oliver Drake, directed by Lew Collins, with a cast headed by Jack Hoxie. Majestic, 6 reels. Beautiful scenery and fine riding in this Western makes the picture about a reformed outlaw who tries to help the blind mother of his dead friend, average entertainment. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HELL BELOW—From the book "Pig Boats" by Comm. Edward Ellsberg, directed by Jack Conway, with a cast including Robert Montgomery, Walter Huston, Jimmy Durante, and Madge Evans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. Romantic melodrama of submarines in the Mediterranean in the World War, where the U. S. Navy appears to have done a good deal of the fighting. Many thrills, a lot of masculine comedy and a love story ending in sacrifice. Many pleasant actors. *Family audience.*

HOLD ME TIGHT—Screen story by Gertrude Rigdon, directed by David Butler, with a cast including James Dunn and Sally Eilers. Fox, 7 reels. A pleasant little story of young married life, the scenes laid mostly in a department store where the fellow loses his job and the girl keeps hers. It gets melodramatic at the end. *Family audience.*

1 COVER THE WATER FRONT—From the novel by Max Miller, directed by James Cruze, with a cast including Ben Lyon, Claudette Colbert and Ernest Torrence. United Artists, 7 reels. A newspaper reporter on the trail of a smuggler—an entertaining combination of romance and rough life, with colorful atmosphere and adventures. *Family audience.*

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE—Screen story by Lou Heifetz and Neil Brant, directed by Edward Sutherland, with a cast including W. C. Fields, Burns and Allen, and Stuart Erwin. Paramount, 8 reels. A hilarious hodge-podge of happenings in a hotel in Wu Hu where people have gathered to look into a Chinese scientist's television invention. A lot of funny situations cleverly put together, with various radio stars like Rudy Vallee, Baby Rose Marie, et cetera, involved, and Peggy Hopkins Joyce added for her own sake. *Family audience.*

THE LIFE OF JIMMY DOLAN—From the novel by Bertram Millhanser and Bessie Marie Dix, directed by Archie Mayo, with a cast including Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Loretta Young and Aline MacMahon. Warner, 8 reels. A young prizefighter who accidentally kills a man has his whole outlook on life changed by some people who help him in the West. Exciting melodrama with several appealing characters. *Family audience.*

THE LITTLE GIANT—Screen story by Robert Lord and Wilson Mizner, directed by Roy Del Ruth, with a cast headed by Edward G. Robinson. First National, 7 reels. A beer baron of Chicago, foreseeing the end of his racket, gets out and goes to California with his fortune, where he is fooled and fleeced by a family he thinks "refined and cultured"—he gets even by reverting to his old technique. Not noteworthy as a picture—made interesting by Robinson's characterization. *Mature audience.*

THE NUISANCE—Screen story by Chandler Sprague and Howard E. Rogers, directed by Jack Conway, with a cast including Lee Tracy, Frank Morgan and Madge Evans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Another racketeering story—an ambulance-chasing lawyer with the help of his good friend, a doctor, fixes "cases" resulting from accidents. A picture well acted and with plenty of zip. *Family audience.*

PEG O' MY HEART—From the play by J. Hartley Manners, directed by Robert Z. Leonard, with a cast headed by Marion Davies. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. The old story of Irish Peg, and her dog Michael, who went to England to learn fine manners and inherit a fortune. A sweet romantic comedy, with a lot

of singing added for Irish atmosphere. *Family audience.*

PROFESSIONAL SWEETHEART—Screen story by Maurine Watkins, directed by William A. Seiter, with a cast including Ginger Rogers, Norman Foster and Zasu Pitts. RKO, 8 reels. An amusing satirical comedy of a radio star and the publicity that made her America's Purity Girl and America's sweetheart. The minor characters are especially good. *Family audience.*

THE RETURN OF CASEY JONES—From novelette by John Johns, directed by J. P. McCarthy, with a cast including Charles Starrett and Ruth Hall. Monogram, 6 reels. A railroad story that children, especially boys, will probably like. The engineer hero's devotion to his mother and his great courage win many honors for him. Sentimental in spots but nevertheless interesting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***REUNION IN VIENNA**—From the play by Robert E. Sherwood, directed by Sidney Franklin, with a cast including John Barrymore, Diana Wynyard and Frank Morgan. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. At a reunion of former members of the Imperial Court ten years after the Austrian revolution an exiled archduke tries to resume a love affair with a girl who has since married. An amusing comedy of the sophisticated type, with Barrymore as a mad Hapsburg. A handsome production, good adult entertainment. *Mature audience.*

RUSTY RIDES ALONE—Screen story by Walt Coburn, directed by D. Ross Lederman, with a cast headed by Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels. An entertaining Western about a cowboy who, with the help of his dog, assists his friends in recovering control of their land. The interest is sustained and the acting of the whole cast is convincing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SHALL WE TELL OUR CHILDREN—Screen story and direction by Willard Mack, with a cast headed by Jean Parker. Columbia, 7 reels. An interesting picture showing what may happen to a carefully brought up girl whose mother refuses to talk the facts of life over with her. A serious subject well handled and excellently acted. There are no unpleasant scenes and there is a good moral lesson for both parents and daughters. *Family audience.*

THE SILK EXPRESS—Screen story by Houston Branch, directed by Ray Enright, with a cast including Neil Hamilton, Dudley Diggs and Sheila Terry. Warner, 6 reels. A mystery story on a transcontinental express, in which a man's life and a vast amount of money depend on the train's getting through in time, with desperate people plotting to delay it. Melodramatic and with a good deal of tenseness. *Family audience.*

***THE SILVER CORD**—From the play by Sidney Howard, directed by John Cromwell, with

a cast including Irene Dunne, Joel McCrea and Laura Hope Crews. RKO, 8 reels. An interesting story dealing with a mother's possessive love for her two sons and the tragedies she almost succeeds in causing. The acting of the entire cast is excellent. *Family audience.*

SOMEWHERE IN SONORA—From a story by Leslie Mason, directed by Mack V. Wright, with a cast headed by John Wayne. Warner, 5 reels. Plenty of good riding and a beautiful white horse in a Western about a young man who goes to Sonora to find a friend who has joined a band of outlaws. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE STORY OF TEMPLE DRAKE—From the novel "Sanctuary" by William Faulkner, directed by Stephen Roberts, with a cast including Miriam Hopkins and Jack LaRue. Paramount, 8 reels. A young girl, craving excitement, finds herself the prisoner of a gangster and it is not until she forces herself to testify for an innocent man accused of murder does she regain her self respect. A sordid but vivid and well acted picture, necessarily departing somewhat from Faulkner's novel. *Mature audience.*

A STUDY IN SCARLET—From a story by Robert Florey after A. Conan Doyle, directed by Edwin Marin, with a cast including Reginald Owen, Anna May Wong and June Clyde. World Wide, 7 reels. A new interpreter of Sherlock Holmes, Reginald Owen, in the adventures of the Scarlet Ring. Not one of the best Sherlock Holmes pictures but pretty good. *Family audience.*

SUNSET PASS—From the novel by Zane Grey, directed by Henry Hathaway, with a cast including Randolph Scott, Tom Keene and Kathleen Burke. Paramount, 7 reels. Although the plot of this picture follows the usual Western formula, the comedy touches, the photography and the fine acting of the cast combine to make it an entertaining film, and above the average of this type. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TOMORROW AT SEVEN—Screen story by Ralph Spence, directed by Ray Enright, with a cast including Chester Morris and Vivienne Osborne. RKO, 7 reels. An interesting mystery with much comedy supplied by two dumb detectives. It concerns the tracing down of a murderer who warns his victims by an ace of spades ingeniously delivered. *Family audience.*

LA VOCE DEL SANGUE (The Call of the Blood)—Synco-Art, 7 reels. A better than usual Italian picture, about the strange fate that came to a brother and sister who had not seen each other since early childhood. Well acted. The dialogue is all in Italian. *Mature audience.*

THE WARRIOR'S HUSBAND—From the play by Julian Thompson, directed by Walter Lang, with a cast including Elissa Landi and Ernest Truex. Fox, 7 reels. Extravagant farce of the war between the Amazons and the Greeks,

women warriors against men, with a mixture of modern wisecracks, the humor ranging from clever satire to broad burlesque. A very handsome production ably acted. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

ALL'S WET THAT ENDS WET—Columbia. Motor boat and aquaplane racing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
CHAMPIONS—Columbia. Various athletic and sport experts. *Family audience.*
OUT OF THE ORDINARY (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational. Interesting items. *Family audience.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 12—Paramount. *Family.*
SAWDUST SIDELIGHTS—Educational. Big circus in winter quarters. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 11—Columbia. *Family audience.*
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 29—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
WORKERS OF THE WORLD (Newman's Travel Talks)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SERIALS AND SKITS

ACES WILD—Tom Howard. Educational. *Family.*
ARABIAN TIGHTS—Charlie Chase. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
BEAUTY ON BROADWAY—Walter Winchell. Universal, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
FIFI—Vivienne Segal. Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family.*
FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS CAN'T BE WRONG—Smith and Dale. Columbia, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
HONESTY PAYS—BUT NOT TOO MUCH—Tom Howard. Educational. *Family audience.*
LASCA (Famous Classics Series)—Hobart Bosworth recites. Capt. Auten. *Family audience.*
ME AND MY PAL—Laurel and Hardy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
THE MOONSHINER'S DAUGHTER—The Masquers. RKO, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
THE NAME IS FAMILIAR—Leon Belasco's orchestra. Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
ONE TRACK MINDS—Thelma Todd, Zasu Pitts. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
SHE OUT-DONE HIM—Burlesque of *She Done Him Wrong*. RKO, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
SKY SYMPHONY—Col. Stoopnagle and Budd. Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
SOME LITTLE BUG WILL GET YOU (Famous Classics Series)—Louise Fazenda recites. Capt. Auten. *Family audience.*
THE THREE MUSKETEERS (Serial)—Episodes Nos. 7-10. Mascot, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CARTOONS

BOSKO THE SHEEP HERDER (Looney Tunes)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*
***A DIZZY DAY** (Sentinel Louey)—RKO. *Family audience.*
***FATHER NOAH'S ARK** (Silly Symphony)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
HOT AND COLD (Pooch the Pup)—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THE MAIL PILOT (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
MATCH KID (Scrappy)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
***MOTHER GOOSE LAND** (Talkartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
RUSSIAN DRESSING (Krazy Kat)—Columbia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
SONG SHOPPING (Bouncing Ball)—Paramount. *Family.*
TECHNO-CRACKED (Flip the Frog)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*
TECHNORACKET (Scrappy)—Columbia. *Family audience.*

(Continued from page 12)

Because *Morgenrot* is directed and acted with authority, because its camera selects and assembles details so as to create a vivid, exciting pattern, and because its story was worth telling, it must be set down as among those films that stand apart.—W. A. B.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
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The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committee affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VIII, No. 7

Sept.-Oct., 1933

Harry Alan Potamkin
An Appreciation

A Study of
Sound Motion Pictures

The Summer
Picture Fare Reviewed

Better Films Forum

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into subgroups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through cooperation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Guide to Selected Pictures

The feature pictures which appeared on the "Weekly Guides to Selected Pictures" for the month of September were as follows:

Ann Vickers
Berkeley Square
The Blarney Kiss
Bureau of Missing Persons
Charlie Chan's Greatest Case
Dance Girl Dance
Dr. Bull
The Emperor Jones
Golden Harvest
Good Companions
I Loved a Woman
Midshipman Jack
My Weakness
Penthouse
Police Car No. 17
S O S Iceberg
Stage Mother
The Solitaire Man
To the Last Man
Too Much Harmony
Torch Singer
Wild Boys of the Road

To those desiring reviews of any of these pictures, copies of the Guide will gladly be sent upon request.

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Vol. VIII, Number 7.

Sept.-Oct., 1933

20c a copy, \$2.00 a year

Harry Alan Potamkin

IN the recent death of Harry Alan Potamkin the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays lost one of the most interesting and interested personalities who has ever been associated with the work of the National Board of Review. But that is a minor loss when compared with that the art of the cinema suffered in losing at a sadly too early date the service, by pen and word, of one of its very most discerning critics and passionate adherents. Potamkin believed the motion picture was the greatest potential form that has come into man's hands for the expression of himself artistically. He sought continuously over a period of years to convince people that this was so, to point out the elements in motion pictures that proved his contention, to define the intellectual and emotional values and the nature of the technique that distinguish the spurious film from the film of truth and beauty and social and artistic significance. He was among the first, and remained the foremost, to insist that the motion picture be formed for more than entertainment, pleasure and diversion, that it must clothe in an aesthetic manner a structure of some vital meaning to the struggle of mankind. That is what made him so important among critics and spokesmen, that gave him his character of deep sincerity, and, in the face of much that is shoddy and disenchanting in motion pictures, kept him enchanted with the prospect of what the cinema could achieve and fresh to the beauty and the value of what has already been put on the motion picture screen.

Potamkin was an enthusiast. His enthu-

siasm led him to a really profound study of the past of the cinema. Because he was a genuine historian he was a sound critic. He had developed a thesis for criticism that was much more than a theory—when in the film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, Joan, about to give up her life at the stake looked at the child suckling its mother where she sat among the spring grasses and flowers, he saw that there Dreyer with a single poignant stroke had completed his meaning of Joan's passion, and that that stroke was not fortuitous. To him *Joan* remained the great motion picture, it satisfied his feeling for artistic integrity; it fulfilled his belief that the film could be a thing of great beauty and great meaning, and reinforced his conviction that the greatest motion picture must have the unity of the greatest works of art, a unity consciously wrought by the inspired but careful artist out of the materials of loveliness and suffering, to both of which he was not a total stranger.

While Potamkin left no book behind, he left in his articles printed in many publications, some well-known and many obscure, in his numerous addresses, and in his lecture notes, material rich enough for a number of books as important as any that have sought to deal with the "name and nature" of cinema. It is to be hoped that this material will be properly brought together and published as a means of memorializing his name and his fame among those who knew him and of perpetuating them among those who are still unfamiliar or only partially so, with the importance of his effort. Lastly, he was the most gener-

ous of all the critics in sharing with others his thought concerning the motion picture and in helping others to advance the good fortune of the art, and in this way his ideas,

not always with the credit duly accorded their author, have permeated the field of motion picture criticism both in this country and abroad.—W. A. B.

A Study of Sound Motion Pictures

By PHILLIP J. RULON

Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

"I hope you will watch this project and be interested in the results. What they will be, none of us know. If we knew, we would not make the experiment. We are approaching the project so far as we can with open minds, in the truly scientific way, putting forth an experiment without any advance knowledge as to what the results will be."

This is the way Professor Kirtley Mather of the Harvard Division of Geology ended his talk before the Annual Conference of the National Board of Review in 1932, describing the experiment being conducted at Harvard to evaluate the sound motion picture as an instructional tool. When the talk was printed in the April 1932 number of this magazine, the editor noted that the results of the experiment would be reported in a forthcoming issue.

During the months which have followed Professor Mather's preliminary report, we have analyzed our data and have determined the results of the experiment. We can now definitely state that when sound motion pictures are properly produced and wisely used in connection with modern classroom procedures, they possess distinct instructional effectiveness over and above that possessed by equally modern methods not employing the motion picture.

Professor Mather described how we chose general science as our experimental instructional material and how we arranged two sets of tools for teaching this material. One of these sets consisted of a specially prepared "typical" textbook and a series of teacher's guides for the instruction of one group of children in the manner common to general science teaching in modern junior high schools. The other set consisted of all of these materials with the addition of a set of sound motion pictures prepared

under the direction of Professor Mather and one of his colleagues, Dr. Navez, of the Harvard Biological Institute. The eight reels of motion pictures were parallel in their content and presentation with the eight chapters of the textbook. Neither the textbook nor the films made any reference to the other, but both were prepared from the same basic outline and covered the same ground. The two sets of instructional materials were truly supplementary to each other.

In three suburbs of Boston we found school conditions satisfactory for our experiment. In all of these three cities general science was offered only in the ninth grade, was required of all students in that grade, was offered five days per week, and for one school period per day. We adopted all of the ninth grade students in those cities as the subjects for our experiment, so we had average typical children to work with, and not just the bright or just the dull.

The students were divided into three groups. To one group (of somewhat more than a thousand children) instruction was offered by means of the textbook only. To another group (of nearly five hundred pupils) instruction was offered by means of the textbook supplemented by the motion pictures. And to the third group (of nearly three hundred pupils) no instruction whatever was offered. That is, the pupils in this third group did not study the particular general science material included in our text (and films), but continued in their accustomed way to study other general science materials which did not overlap ours.

The purpose of the third group was, of course, to provide a zero point on our scale of instructional effect. If a general science

test is given to the average high school boy or girl who has not taken general science, that boy or girl will not necessarily score zero on the test. That is, a zero amount of instruction in general science cannot be expected to result in a zero amount of information in the average intelligent human being. We wanted to be certain that whatever test score our instructed children earned could be ascribed to the instructional effectiveness of our teaching procedures. Therefore we resolved to measure their scores not from the zero score of the test, but from a score which had been determined to indicate a zero amount of instruction: that is, the score made by our third group, who did not study our material.

We took a good many pains to make certain that our three groups of children were equal at the outset of the experiment with respect to all of those factors supposed to influence achievement in general science. We arranged to have them equal not only with respect to age, intelligence test scores, and general science information scores, but with respect to the general quality of the community in which they resided and a number of other factors. The precision with which the groups were balanced will be described in some detail in the complete report of the experiment.* This will be published by the Harvard University Press under the title "The Sound Motion Picture in Science Teaching" by the present writer, and may be consulted by those interested in a more detailed report. Suffice it to say at this time that the groups were so nicely balanced that it is almost inconceivable that the superiority exhibited by the film children at the end of the experiment could have been due in any significant degree to any possible superiority possessed by them at the beginning of the experiment.

And during the six weeks in which the experimental instruction was carried on, the same care was taken to provide equality in those conditions commonly supposed to affect the achievement of pupils. The children who studied with the films studied in classes of the same size, for the same number of minutes per day, and for the same number of days, as those who studied with the textbook alone. The teachers of the film

children were equal in noted excellence to those of the non-film children, had the same length of school day, and the same size of teaching load.

And yet the children who studied from both the textbook and the films learned a distinctly greater amount of the subject matter and apparently comprehended it considerably better, than did their colleagues who did not have the privilege of film supplementation in their study materials. The amount by which the film-taught children excelled the non-film children in immediate learning was 20.5 per cent. That is, on the tests given immediately after the instructional period closed, the film-taught children scored 20.5 per cent farther ahead of the entirely untaught children than did those who studied by means of the textbook without the films.

The groups of children employed in our experiment were so large, and this obtained percentage of superiority so striking, that the result must be taken at its face value as significant. But to guard against placing too much confidence in a result which might conceivably have arisen from accident in the selection of our children, the probable error of the index of superiority was computed. This was found to be only 2.6 per cent. The superiority of the teaching technique employed with the film group was therefore established with sufficient certainty to satisfy the most rigorous criteria of statistical significance. Indeed, the smallness of this probable error enables us to say more than (merely) that the film-aided technique is superior to the non-film. We may with assurance conclude from our results that the film-aided technique is superior to the non-film by as much as 10 per cent.

Let us suppose this experiment to be repeated an indefinitely large number of times and the results from all repetitions averaged. Let us call the average finding for all of these supposed repetitions the true index of superiority for the film-aided technique. Then the comparison of our obtained index, 20.5 per cent, with its probable error, 2.6 per cent, enables us to state that the likelihood that that true index of film superiority would turn out to be as low as 10 per cent is only about one in a thousand. And the likelihood that the true index would

* See *Book Review*, page 7.

turn out to be as small as zero is utterly negligible.

These were the results of the immediate tests, given as soon as the instructional period was over. At the end of somewhat more than three months, during which time the children did not again study our subject matter, we administered tests again to find out how much the children had remembered. The results of this testing showed an even greater superiority for the film-taught children. Here the percentage by which they excelled the non-film children was 38.5 per cent.

Both statistically and practically, this superiority in retained learning was even more significant than that appearing in the immediate tests. School people are not, of course, vitally interested in teaching children things that will be forgotten as soon as the school day is over. The desirability of permanent retention of materials learned is so obvious that no one takes the trouble to state it. But it is nevertheless the assumption which underlies our whole educational system and is a fact which makes our retention results all-important. Briefly stated, those results were that the film-taught children not only learned more and remembered more, but they actually remembered a larger proportion of the larger amount they had learned!

Probably no one was more surprised at the striking superiority exhibited by the film method of instruction than were the experimenters themselves. As Professor Mather said, we put forth the experiment without any advance knowledge as to what the results would be. During the experiment, a number of the teachers who did not have the films in their classes stated quite positively that they thought the film children would "win." And Professor Mather had said that he would be greatly disappointed if the film instruction did not unmistakably demonstrate its worth. But on the other hand, the teachers who were using the films in their classrooms were of the opinion that the children could not possibly get as much from the films as they could from an intensive study of the textbook. One of these teachers even went so far as to say that if the children did not have to "waste so much time looking at motion pictures," he would

probably have time "to really teach them something about general science."

To the experimenters it appeared that perhaps this teacher might be right. For of course, all the time the film children were looking at the films, their colleagues in the text-only group were studying the textbook. And at the end of the experiment, all of the children's learning was measured by means of tests which were based upon the textbook alone, and not upon the films! Furthermore, these tests had been tried out in preliminary form on uninstructed children, and all questions which many of these children could answer without having studied our textbook had been deleted from the tests.

In the early part of this report, I stated that the film-taught children not only learned more, but understood better what they learned. This statement was by no means based on subjective opinion. We divided the items of the tests into two types, one type measuring factual information, the kind of thing one learns by rote and remembers as an isolated fact, and the other the "thought" type of men which dealt with the why and wherefore of things; the causes, effects, and importances of facts. "Rote" memory items were of this sort: The number of stars visible on a clear night is about two thousand. Or: Carnivorous animals are those which feed upon the flesh of other animals. "Thought" items, on the other hand, were those of the sort: Steep streams cut their beds faster than do those not so steep. Or: The Sun appears larger than the other stars mainly because it is so much closer to us.

Now when the tests were scored so as to obtain "rote memory" scores and "thought" item scores separately, the film-taught children exhibited even greater superiority on the "thought" items than they did on the "rote memory" items. Surely these results do not support the often heard criticism of the use of films in teaching; that is, that "the films may teach the children a lot of unrelated facts, but they do not make them think."

It must not be thought that the above results were selected for presentation in this magazine merely because they favored the film-aided procedure in teaching. It is true

that our data were subdivided in many ways, and I have not presented the results in all their detail. But I have not selected those results which strikingly favor the films. Had I been trying to do so, I might have reported the amount of superiority exhibited by the film-taught children when measured by means of a picture test and scored for "thought" items. Thus measured at the end of the retention period, the film-taught children exhibited more than twice as much superiority over the non-film children as any I have reported above!

Surely, provided only that good films are wisely used, there can no longer be any reasonable doubt concerning the superior pedagogical effectiveness of the film-supplemented technique of instruction.

Book Review

The Sound Motion Picture in Science Teaching

DR. Rulon in the above summary of the Carnegie Study of sound motion pictures has referred to the complete report of the study. Since the receipt of his article the complete report entitled "The Sound Motion Picture in Science Teaching" has been published by the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University, as one in the series of Harvard studies in education. The School of Education, the book states, is actively interested in the publication of material which will help to interpret various selected phases of educational theory and practice. The recognition of the motion picture as an important educational phase is of especial interest to the readers of this Magazine. And the volume contains in its recording of an experiment many points of value in a consideration of the use of the teaching film, and so while of practical aid to teachers and educators it has something also to offer to Better Films Councils, Parent-Teacher Associations and such groups in their school contact activity. For example the question as to whether or not the use of sound films in the school justifies the cost is answered in a practical not a theoretical way.

The volume covers 236 pages and contains a bibliography and much material as

to test forms, et cetera, in addition to the text.

Harvard University Press. Price, \$2.50.

The Juniors Go on Record

CARRYING her interest in the Junior Review Committee work of the National Board with her on her holiday this summer Patricia Hagan of the editorial staff of this magazine and statistician for the Junior Review group of the National Board, arranged a showing for the juniors in her home community of Bristol, Va., through the cooperation of the local theatre manager. *Hell Below*, a picture of submarine warfare in the Mediterranean, was chosen for the study.

Ballots distributed to the young reviewers asked for their thoughts on the entertainment and instructional qualities of the film shown, the type of audience—mature, family or juvenile. The vote for the family audience was far in the lead, with one thinking little girl of 12 adding a note that children under 8 should not see the picture.

All agreed that they would recommend the picture to their friends as above the average, and the boys were particularly enthusiastic over the details of the workings of a submarine. The hero of the picture, a young lieutenant received the majority vote for the most interesting character with the stern captain a close runner-up.

Many thought the love element was unnecessary, a 10-year-old boy who liked war but no love adding strongly, "It was silly to have love in it—the picture was good but would have been better with more fighting and no love at all." Consequently the vote for the heroine as the leading player was shy, only a few members of her sex "sticking" loyally by her.

As to the most interesting incident in the film, two divided the votes. They were the strain by all the men to repair the crippled submarine when the oxygen was almost exhausted and the conclusion in which the hero gallantly met death. A lone 14-year-old boy added a note that this sad ending "was not right." Questioned concerning the desire

(Continued on page 11)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Summer Fare

THE pictures this summer from which most might have been expected have been the most disappointing; some of the least pretentious have been the most satisfying. Nothing has come along that could be called really exceptional.

The Power and the Glory has a good deal of sincerity in its acting and excellent direction to recommend it. Some of its press-agent ballyhoo borders on absurdity: its salesmen have claimed for it a new cinema technique, and have even put a bronze tablet in a New York theatre commemorating the first public showing of "the first motion picture in which narratage was used as a method of telling a dramatic story." That slightly illegitimate word "narratage," thought up by some eager mind in imitation of montage, means only an off-screen voice helping to tell the story, with comments. Far from being a novelty, it was tried most unhappily in the first American version of *White Hell of Pitz Palu*, in which the excitable Graham McNamee ranted so vigorously that audiences rebelled and stayed away, and another version *sans narratage*—far more effective—was resurrected. This style of narrative-comment is probably most familiar in *Screen Souvenirs* and their various imitations. However, whether novel or not, this method adds little but confusion to *The Power and the Glory*, and of course adds nothing to cinematic technique: quite the contrary. The plot of the picture, concerned with the career of a railroad magnate to whom success

brought unhappiness and a turgid triangular tragedy involving his son and his second wife, owes a tremendous debt to such actors as Colleen Moore and Spencer Tracy and to the sympathetic skill of William K. Howard as director.

Voltaire, as a vehicle for George Arliss, sounds promising on paper. On the screen it is something for which Mr. Arliss, as an actor and as a respecter of history, might well feel apologetic. The best one can say of it is that in it Mr. Arliss continues his intermittent habit of turning vigorous historical figures into foxy old gentlemen in wigs with whimsical ways and hearts of gold, which many people seem to enjoy. The story is mild and rather dull, and the perversion of history childish. Louis XV appears as a sort of silly-ass Englishman, a vague combination of amiability and fretfulness; La Pompadour, the sparkling courtesan, is shown as a gentle philanthropist, timidly devoted to good works: over the whole court hovers an air of respectable domesticity, completely hiding the heartlessness and debauchery that were watering the seeds of the French Revolution. Voltaire himself has been subjected still more to the sugar-and-water treatment—gone is the sardonic wit, the brilliant mind, the savage vanity and indomitable will, that made that daring philosopher a fascinating riddle of personality and a contradictory embodiment of intellectual dynamite. Instead we have a doddering, crochety example of senile decay who might well be an inmate of an old man's home for the feeble-minded. The pity of

BULLETIN

1933

Exceptional

*Cavaleade
Hell on Earth
Ivan
M*

*Morgenrot
Poil de Carotte
Topaze
Zoo in Budapest*

Honorable Mention

*Der Hauptmann von
Koepenick
Hertha's Erwachen*

it is that the material was all at hand for a vivid picture of pre-Revolutionary France, and Mr. Arliss is quite capable of brilliantly acting the many-sided free-thinker who did so much to stir up the Revolution. But Mr. Arliss, since he took to the screen, must needs, it seems, keep himself lovable for the simple.

The Song of Songs held out the promise of being a mature though perhaps not highly uplifting picture, what with the combination of Sudermann's novel, Marlene Dietrich and Rouben Mamoulian. Sudermann's book—considered rather daring in its day—was a sincere and rather stodgy study of a girl with inescapable promiscuous instincts, whose hold on ideals was symbolized by the manuscript of her father's musical setting of the Song of Solomon. She finally lost the manuscript and took irrevocably to the streets. Little of this story has been used by the picture except the title and the heroine's name, and it is probably just as well. But the story substituted for it is extremely commonplace—about a German girl who after being wronged by a lover and tortured by a husband goes in for night life—movie night life—from which she is finally rescued by the repentant young man who started it all. A nude statue is used with much craftiness and all the effect of a naked woman, without the prospect of so much difficulty with censors. Rouben Mamoulian, whose Theatre Guild brand of smooth efficiency has given him something of a reputation for turning out a superior kind of art, unfolds this tale in a handsome manner, overlaid with "artistic" photography, which is often beautiful without being very much alive. Marlene Dietrich's remarkable gift for suggesting hidden depths gives the picture its only moving human quality.

Mr. Cecil B. DeMille goes in for social reform with his customary vigor in *This Day and Age*, wherein the younger generation turns on the underworld and routs it completely. By putting some of the plot machinery of Fritz Lang's powerful picture, *M*, into a Boy Scoutish setting Mr. DeMille has concocted something quite effective in a rather questionable way. It is certainly more amusing than most of the DeMille productions.

Among personalities, the increasingly shining light is Katherine Hepburn, who puts heart and glamor into a swanky theatrical story of a stage-struck girl, *Morning Glory*. The plot gives the heroine one of those last minute triumphs that happen so incredibly often in fiction, but Zoe Akins has a grand air with her puppets that makes one somehow anxious to believe in them, and in this case Lowell Sherman's suave direction goes a long way in creating plausibility. There is also the younger Fairbanks, growing maturer and surer in his acting, and above all Miss Hepburn, who more and more seems to be not just a girl who has been lucky in getting effective parts but a genuine actress.

Two other players have been given a chance this summer to show they are something more than just type actors, Charles Ruggles and Mary Boland in one of the pleasantest pictures in months, *Mama Loves Papa*. The effective little sketch of suburban married life they gave in *If I Had a Million* must have supplied the hint for this picture, which unpretentiously but humorously and touchingly shows a simple couple briefly adventuring among the rich. It is a most satisfying film.

The irresistible combination of Marie Dressler and Wallace Beery suffers a severe strain in *Tugboat Annie*, which gives Miss Dressler the opportunity of being gruffly and indomitably loyal to a drunken husband through many creaky trials and tribulations, including the ruin of a dinner by dropping a cake of soap into a kettle of sauerkraut. Out of material on that level these two veterans create entertainment that delights full houses.

Musical shows are with us again, pretty good ones, though they seem unable to get away from the backstage plot. *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *Moonlight and Pretzels* are the most successful of them, and the best. *Broadway to Hollywood* is only incidentally musical, but it is decidedly backstage, a sort of *Cavalcade* of vaudeville, with several stars scattered through it to add a rather unnecessary sparkle to the excellent performances of Alice Brady and Frank Morgan.

Pure Broadway is *Lady for a Day*, a New York Cinderella tale (the Cinderella

an old apple woman) of such frank and sprightly hokum that it is remarkably good entertainment. Beggars, gangsters and policemen, mayors, governors and Spanish nobility, mingle in a lively tale in which laughs keep the tears from getting too frequent or sentimental, deftly written, knowingly directed and unerringly cast.

Stage plays have fared well in their screen translations—and they have been pretty good run-of-the-season plays. *One Sunday Afternoon* is faithfully screened, with Stephen Roberts' special kind of skill, a mildly pleasant picture following the present tendency to revert to the nineties. *When Ladies Meet* is talky—it had to be—but it is better talk than most movies manage to achieve. *Another Language*—tough chewing for those who believe all mothers are sacred—loses some of the tang of its bitter humor on the screen, but perhaps the screen could not stand the full dose undiluted. An excellent cast helps to make one forget the plodding though thoroughly respectful direction of Mr. E. H. Griffith, one of the least cinematic of directors who somehow gets assigned to most of the "smarter" plays when they are put into the movies. *Three Cornered Moon*, which Elliott Nugent manages to make one forget was ever a play, emerges most successfully of all—gay and human and delightful.

One of the odd phenomena of the summer is the pervasive influence of Mae West. From one-reel slapstick to full length feature there is never a blonde trollop who doesn't try to imitate the hearty bawdiness of Diamond Lou. None of them do it well—but their attempts are highly flattering to the latest exponent of seductive lure.—J. S. H.

Paul Robeson on the Screen

FOR a long time we have been coming across the wish, expressed sometimes in print and often in private, to see Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* made into a film, with Paul Robeson playing in it; and the director most often nominated as the likeliest to do a good imaginative job of it has been Dudley Murphy. Now the wish has been fulfilled—*Emperor Jones*, Paul Robeson, Dudley Murphy and all.

As a short play in seven scenes, all held together by the continuous loudening beat of a tom-tom so that it seemed like a single act (as it was in mood and dramatic feeling) *The Emperor Jones* was an effective thing, and it has come to stand among the classics of the American theatre. It began close to the jungle, with the jungle-feeling creeping into even its first scene, and when Jones fled into the woods in the second scene and began that night flight of his, with primeval horrors and ghosts of his past creeping upon him in the dark, a spell was cast on the audience—they followed tensely the mounting terror of his journey as his bravado and civilization fell away from him and left him a cowering savage, frightened by the spirits of darkness playing upon all the superstitions of his race. It was like a swift piece of music, in one movement and one key, that crashed to its climax and ended.

The picture tells little that the play did not suggest—about the Pullman porter who killed a man in a crap game, killed the guard in the convict camp and escaped to a small isle in the West Indies where he made himself the emperor of the ignorant blacks, and grew rich sweating taxes out of them. Then they rose against him and he fled into the jungle, trusting in the magic of his silver bullet to save him from them in the end—but they had silver bullets, too.

O'Neill's play began with the dethroning of the emperor. The part he only suggested has been written by Du Bose Heyward, who wrote "Porgy" and knows how to dramatize negro life and character. This part is mostly rich and lively in its effect, building up against a background of swarming racial color the genial, strutting braggart who learned about the power of money from the passengers on his Pullman, and when he found a chance to do it on his little island proceeded to live his dreams of grandeur. Then, as abruptly as a tear in the film, comes the change to the O'Neill part. The drama splits into two sections, different in style, treatment and feeling, and nothing holds them together but Paul Robeson. The direction that put so much vivid life into the first half falls back on stage ideas and the ancient movie device of double exposure (poorly done at that) to create the

terrors of the jungle. And there is no terror—because after the vivid realism we have become accustomed to we are only conscious, with a definite shock, of how unnatural it is to hear this man bursting into a long, long monologue, talking at actual figures of what are only shadows in his mind, working, working to bring off a theatrical stunt. Only Paul Robeson's way of handling it all keeps us interested.

So the film is a disappointment—a big one. But it is well worth seeing, and seeing more than once, for the acting of Paul Robeson. In presence, voice and all the subtleties of acting he fills his part with splendid vitality. He, at least, has seized his opportunity with magnificent success. All the acting is good, for that matter, and Dudley Digges creates one of those contemptible crawly characters that only he can do so well.—J. S. H.

Information on the Selected Pictures Guide

OUR readers will note that this first fall 1933 issue of the magazine does not contain the usual Selected Pictures Guide. This is an experiment but we are considering the permanent elimination of this department from the magazine for the reason that we do not believe a monthly service on recommended pictures is of much real service. By the time it reaches the public many of the pictures reviewed may have come and gone in a community. It is advance information that is of value, both to groups and to interested individuals, and such information is available from the National Board of Review in its Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures. This Guide is prepared each Friday giving short reviews, the audience classifications, etc., on the selected pictures, in fact it lists the same information which has later appeared in the Selected Pictures department of the magazine. And since it is essentially advance information that is desired we think it will serve our readers better to have the Weekly Guide. The Guide will be available to all magazine

subscribers for the special rate of \$1.00 a year, a sample copy will be mailed free to those requesting it. Word from our readers as to what they prefer in the matter of this selected pictures information will be welcomed, and will influence future action. For the selected pictures appearing on the September Weekly Guides see page 2.

Helps if You Must Be a Booker

DO you get calls in your Council activity to suggest or secure pictures for special showings—exceptional pictures, club pictures, church pictures, foreign pictures, junior matinee pictures and what have you?

If you do then you certainly are seeking continually sources of information on types of pictures and their availability. The National Board of Review offers you answer in its different specialized lists. Two just completed are:

“Exceptional Photoplays,” a list containing films which have been rated by the Exceptional Photoplays Committee of the National Board as possessing outstanding merit in the artistic development of the motion picture; and

“Foreign Films in America,” listing over 60 foreign films which have been recently released in the United States.

Lists soon to come are: “Films on Subjects of Timely Interest” and “Junior Matinee Films.”

Others will follow. Each can be secured for 10c in stamps from the National Board.

(Continued from page 7)

for peace or war aroused by such films showing the horrors of combat the children were unanimous for peace with the exception of two—one the boy with the war-but-no-love complex and the other a 10-year-old girl who remained with him on the theory of “better and bigger wars.”

Vote on preferences revealed that the younger children remain true to their desire for Western films—the older boys and girls preferring light comedy.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

THE Hartford (Conn.) Better Films Club had a busy, varied and successful 1932-33 season of activity although it was then one of the newest of such organizations, having been organized in June 1932. The November meeting was held at the Children's Museum and plans for enlarging the membership and discussing ways and means of carrying out the purposes of the organization were considered. The purposes are to establish in the local press a "weekly guide," with an audience classification to the better or selected films showing each week in the local theatres, to cooperate with the local exhibitors by encouraging public support for all fine pictures, to encourage pictures especially suitable for boys and girls through the medium of Saturday morning and afternoon performances, to furnish an opportunity for a helpful exchange of ideas between exhibitors and their patrons and to urge everyone interested in motion pictures to join this organization so that they may voice their ideas where they may receive attention.

In December Mrs. Helen S. MacPherson, President of the Club and Chief Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court, was one of the speakers at a joint meeting of the women's organizations of Hartford, held in the Y. W. C. A. She told of the efforts of the local committee and of the effect of movies on delinquent children, a subject which her position in the Juvenile Court well qualified her to present.

The December meeting of the Club convened in the Immanuel Congregational Church and the speaker was William H. Rhodes and his subject "A History of Motion Pictures." Mr. Rhodes is a traveler and lecturer whose talks are founded on over 100,000 miles of travel through Europe and the Orient. Another December activity was the sponsorship of a preview of *With Williamson Beneath the Sea*. Members of the club and representatives of the Boy and Girl Scouts and several women's organizations attended. The picture was en-

thusiastically received and was later shown as a regular feature at the theatre.

The January meeting, held as a luncheon meeting at the City Club, was given over to the consideration of plans to inaugurate special weekly programs of motion pictures suitable for children. The club hoped to be able to secure such films and present them through negotiations with Hartford theatres at times when the day performances would not conflict with school hours and at prices so low as to make the venture profitable.

The superintendent of the local schools addressed the Club at its February meeting. He urged a program of education rather than censorship of motion pictures. The club should not confine itself to interest in children's films, he pointed out, but should consider adult pictures as well. Children in upper grades are not interested in fairy stories and juvenile pictures, but want action and thrills he believes.

The editor of the Hartford Times spoke at the March meeting: "It isn't what is on the screen, but what is in the head," he said, speaking of censorship and selection of motion pictures. He did not believe in censorship, he said, but rather in putting the responsibility on the theatre-goer and manager. Each theatre-goer is different. When we divide motion pictures into classes suitable for children, families or adults, that is all we can do. "Women should protect the home as well as make it," he said and pointed out that "there are plenty of kids, plenty of dimes, but the kids and the dimes must be steered into the theatres with the right kind of pictures. After all this responsibility is with the parent."

The consideration of children's interests in films led to the conducting of a community-wide "letter box" contest in March among the children of Hartford. All children in Greater Hartford from 7 to 16 years of age were eligible for the contest. They were asked to write their own opinions of what they liked to see at the movies. The letters to be addressed to Mr. Theatre

Manager in care of the Better Films Club and signed with the contestant's full name, age, home address, school and grade. They were judged on neatness, style, development of ideas and originality. Interest in the prize letter competition among the children prompted ambitious literary efforts according to many parents and teachers. Members of the letter box committee graded the letters as they were collected. The contest closed early in April. The prize winner was Bob Barstow, 13 years old, who was awarded a prize of \$5. There were in all 15 prizes won by young people from 9 to 15 years of age and representing many schools. Prizes were donated by a number of interested local stores and individuals. This was a clever way of interesting the young people in the Club's activity and of informing the Club members of the preferences of young people as an aid to them in their special matinee plans.

A new president of the Better Films Club was elected at the May meeting to succeed Mrs. MacPherson, founder and first president. The new president is Mr. Sigmund Adler, vocational counselor of the faculty of the Hartford Public High School. Mrs. MacPherson is now serving as a member of the executive board.

AN affiliated Better Films Committee of which the National Board is justly proud is that of Knoxville, Tenn. The Committee has a representative membership and works closely along the principles suggested by the Better Films National Council of the National Board. They have characterized it as the selective method, they say, "making comments on the better pictures in hopes that we can assist in creating a demand for a high standard of entertainment, in other words, a constructive principle and not one of censorship."

The president is Mrs. H. M. Jennison who gives much of interest to the work. She feels enthusiastic about the Committee at present and writes, "The Committee has had its 'ups and downs,' naturally, and during the height of the nation's prosperity we felt we had little to encourage us. Gradually, people began to think again and wanted to know the kind of pictures their young people were seeing and how their money

was being spent. Different church societies began to ask us to tell them about our work and what was being done over the country to improve the pictures. Being active in Parent-Teacher work I realized long ago that that organization was our best means of getting mothers interested in informing themselves about the kind of pictures their children were seeing. And also the best means of letting them know about our Better Films work—where our bulletins are available—and in urging them not to let their children go to shows which we did not recommend. The Central Council of the P.-T. A. is an easy means of getting word to each school. The president of the Council is a member of our Committee. We have had other things to encourage us this year. A new theatre manager, a graduate of Georgia 'Tech,' was sent for the three Publix theatres last fall. He has shown a friendly spirit from the beginning. Of course, I realize that hard times make many people more willing to co-operate but I do not feel that this is wholly the reason."

The Committee has a contact with the newspapers which enables it to carry word of endorsed pictures giving valuable information to the interested public. Bulletin boards in the two largest department stores and the Y. W. C. A. carry their picture recommendations and there is a system of phoning the schools when a picture of especial interest is being shown.

An active member of the Committee is Mrs. B. A. Tripp who is Motion Picture Chairman of the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs. Mrs. Tripp has had a part in local better films activities for a number of years and is extending her experience to a larger field while still keeping her interest in the Knoxville Committee.

In spite of what this Committee has accomplished in the past they write that the real work is before them, proving that they have not slacked in their endeavor and interest.

A Junior Committee as part of a Better Films Council is something the up-to-date Council cannot overlook. Such a group of young people offers stimulating youthful viewpoint to the adult group and provides for trained and interested coming

members to carry forward the work. How the Junior Committee works in Rutherford, N. J., is told in the following annual report from the Junior Secretary:

"The Junior Better Films Committee, composed of high school girls, has held five regular meetings and three special events this year, under the supervision of Mrs. A. L. Herald, our most capable advisor. At the beginning of the year we had 21 members, of whom 9 were seniors graduating in June. New members were elected this spring to fill in these vacancies.

"The officers of the Committee consist of a chairman, vice-chairman, recording secretary, corresponding secretary and treasurer. The purpose of this organization is to teach a group of high school movie-goers how to discriminate between pictures. In the Spring each member must pay an assessment not to exceed 25c to defray incidental expenses and to subscribe for the National Board of Review Magazine.

"The first meeting which was held in October was for the purpose of organization. Mrs. Herald explained to the new members the purpose of the Committee and the work of the organization in New York City reviewing all motion pictures. Committees for the year were appointed—they were: Contest, Hallowe'en party, Puppet show for December meeting, Private showing of George Washington film, Clippings and hospitality and Annual tea.

"The Hallowe'en Party Committee with the help of some of the other Junior members, sponsored a Hallowe'en Party on the stage of the Rivoli Theatre. About 2,000 children took part in the costume parade and 150 in the games. The prizes were donated by several of the local merchants.

"During November we also sponsored an essay contest. Junior and senior high school members were eligible. The first prize was awarded for an essay on *Street Scene* and second and third, essays on *Alexander Hamilton*. The November meeting was a dinner at the Baptist church at which different members spoke on various phases of Junior work. The December meeting was held at the High School and was a joint meeting with the Senior Better Films Committee. Several members of the Committee gave a Chinese puppet show, 'The

Willow Plate.' The winning prize essays were read and the prizes awarded. The meeting concluded with refreshments prepared by the Senior Committee, and an enjoyable social hour.

"At the January meeting Mrs. Herald read several articles on the production of motion pictures. The rest of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of reviewer's ballots, which are a necessary part of our work. For the February meeting we helped in the showing of a George Washington film. It was shown twice at Union School and at Pierrepont School. An admission price of 10c was asked to help buy the film which was to become the property of the Rutherford schools. Our part in this project was to advertise the program in all the schools, to take tickets and to usher at the showing. For the March meeting we went to see the film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* which was procured by the Senior Committee from the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures.

"At the April meeting a list of probationers was selected from which next year's members were to be chosen. The rest of the meeting was given over to making out review ballots, and discussing the pictures reviewed. The May meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Herald. It was given for the probationers. The local librarian gave a talk on 'How Books and Films Are Related.' After refreshments Mrs. Harry G. Grover, past president of the Senior Committee, spoke. Mrs. Herald explained, for the benefit of the probationers, the purpose of the National Board of Review and of the ballots. Ruth Koehler, chairman of the Junior Committee, explained the purpose of the Better Films work.

"The Junior Better Films Committee feels pleased with the work of the past year and expects the work of the next year to be even more successfully accomplished."

THE successful 1932-33 season of the Jacksonville (Fla.) Better Films Council after so many years of activity proves that there is a continuing interest and purpose in such an organization. At the November meeting reports of the various Committees were given and Mrs. James A. Craig

who served for a long period as president and capable leader of the Council, summarized for the benefit of new members and as a re-statement for old members, the purpose and work of the National Board of Review with which the Jacksonville Council is affiliated.

The December meeting was devoted to an outline of the coming National Board of Review conference at which the present president of the Council, Joseph L. Mar-ron, librarian of the Jacksonville Public Library, was to be a speaker and also to act as delegate from the local group. Rabbi I. L. Kaplan, whose wife is one of the vice-presidents of this Council, was the speaker for the January meeting.

The Council responded to the expressed interest in seeing the outstanding foreign films by securing for the local L'Alliance Francaise the exceptional film *A Nous La Liberte*. Council members as well as members of L'Alliance and French teachers and students were invited to the showing which was held at the Florida Theatre.

The Council meetings continued through the summer. At the July luncheon meeting the speaker was Dr. Henry Hanson of the Florida State Board of Health. His subject was "Moving Pictures in a Public Health Program." Carl Bohnenberger, assistant librarian of the Public Library, addressed the Council at their August luncheon meeting. The September meeting was given to a general discussion of motion pictures.

EXCERPTS, or shall we say news shots, from an interesting letter which has come to us from Mrs. Arthur T. Condit, financial secretary of the Cincinnati, O., Better Motion Picture Council, will serve to give some idea of certain recent activities and interests of the Council.

Mrs. Condit writes, "I must say that I have enjoyed my first year in the Better Motion Picture Council very much and think we have accomplished many good things. First of all we have gotten the managers to let us review all pictures on Saturday afternoons, making it possible to get our recommendations in the Monday papers. I am mailing a list of the pictures we have reviewed these past eight weeks. We send copies of these to all P.-T. A.'s in all the

grammar schools, high schools, the university, public libraries, all institutions, including the hospitals, as the nurses have made a special request for them.

"The Council was invited to a preview of the motion picture *Secrets*. We thought it charming, Leslie Howard's acting superb and wrote United Artists a letter telling them so. *Cavalcade* has been quite popular in Cincinnati and we are giving a special performance of it for the university students, asking only fifteen cents admission so everyone can see it. Two young women who graduated from the university this year have become members of the Council and are very much interested in the work.

"We have had some splendid speakers at our ten open meetings, on topics well worth hearing. Also last October we gave a luncheon inviting the managers of all the local theatres and they each gave interesting talks. We are trying to get the recreation commissioner to encourage community singing in some of the theatres, which I think is very good."

Mrs. Martin E. McKee, president of the Council, shows the degree of her interest when she writes, "We have had an interesting year and a propitious one. I feel there is so much for us to do, so many interesting phases to develop that I am more than ever convinced that our work is tremendously vital."

IN January of this year Mrs. Homer J. Gates, one of the directors of the Buffalo, N. Y., Federation of Women's Clubs, wrote to us of the formation of a Better Films Council in Buffalo which was to function under her chairmanship. She expressed in her letter an anxiety that she and the members of her committee be well informed about motion pictures generally and she was questioning then such Council procedures as expenses, ballot forms, frequency and form of reports on pictures.

Since that time the Council has found a satisfactory answer to these questions and has worked out a plan whereby it functions effectively both as to machinery and service to the public and its reports are being widely distributed to many groups in the city carrying information of value to discriminating theatre-goers and interested parents.

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THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committee affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Leslie Howard and Heather Angel in "Berkeley Square" (see page 8)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into subgroups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through cooperation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Guide to Selected Pictures

The feature pictures which appeared on the "Weekly Guides to Selected Pictures" for the month of October were

Above the Clouds
After Tonight
Bombshell
The Bowery
Chance at Heaven
Cougar the King Killer
Day of Reckoning
Duck Soup
Ever in My Heart
Footlight Parade
He'll and High Water
I'm No Angel
The Kennel Murder Case
King for a Day
The Mad Game
Meet the Baron
My Lips Betray
My Woman
Saturday's Millions
Savage Gold
Strawberry Roan
The Throne of the Gods
Thunder Over Mexico
Tillie and Gus
Vi Som Gar Köksvägen
War of the Range
The Worst Woman in Paris?

To those desiring reviews of any of these pictures, copies of the Guide will gladly be sent upon request.

NOV 10 1933

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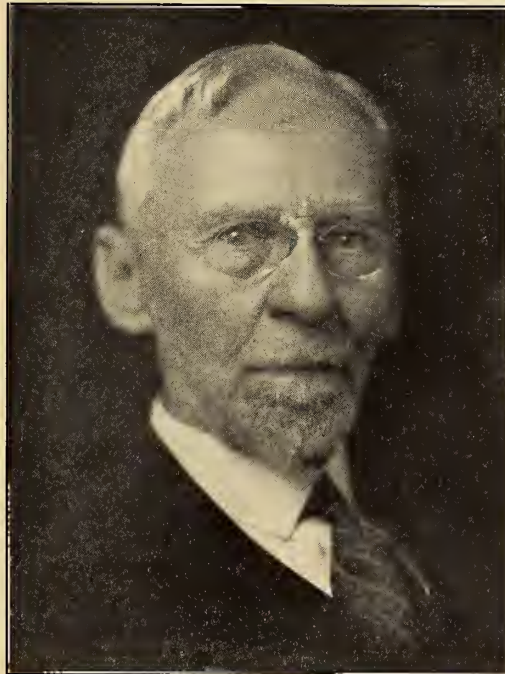
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The National Board's New Chairman

THE announcement is made of the election of Dr. George W. Kirchwey as chairman of the National Board of Review. Dr. Kirchwey succeeds Judge John R. Davies who has occupied the chairmanship for the last two years and who remains with the National Board as a member of the Executive Committee. The election of Dr. Kirchwey should come as welcome news to the friends of the National Board. For a number of years as a member of the Executive Committee he has played a leading role in the affairs of the organization, particularly at its Annual Conference which he has addressed upon several occasions, and at the Annual Luncheon where he was toastmaster last year and in 1930. Dr.



Dr. George W. Kirchwey

Kirchwey has long been distinguished in the field of social endeavor. Many readers of this Magazine are familiar with his record which may be briefly recounted as follows:

Admitted to the New York bar in 1882, he later became Dean of the Albany

Law School and then Dean of the Law School of Columbia University. Commissioner of Prison Reform in New York State from 1913 to 1914, he was made Warden of Sing Sing prison in 1915. Following this he went to the New York

School of Social Work as Director of its Department of Criminology. He is a member of the Committee on Criminal Courts of the Charity Organization Society and Vice-President of the Prison Association, both of New York.

As student and author of many books on law and crime, Dr. Kirchwey has long been interested in the motion picture and is recognized as an authority on social questions pertaining to the films. For this reason and be-

cause of his international prestige, he has been one of the most valuable personages ever to be connected with the National Board. His wisdom has given it guidance of an unusual nature and his enthusiasm has been an encouragement

to all with whom he has come in contact within the province of its activity. Now that he has a measure of time to devote to the Chairmanship, his leadership assures a spirit in the affairs of the Board which is bound to be beneficial both to the local work and to the work of the affiliated groups in the field. The National Board feels that it is to be congratulated in having Dr. Kirchwey as its new Chairman. His statement as Chairman follows:

"There has long been a place in the community for a public-spirited body of citizens which seeks to evaluate the motion picture on a plane that is both critical and progressive and which rests on a foundation of experience. The National Board of Review has occupied this place since 1915, when it began to evolve its program for community organization to gain and develop the best social uses of the motion picture. Many groups of intelligent people today, either affiliated with the National Board, or working independently of it, have patterned their activity in accord with its philosophy of selection and classification as a solution of the motion picture problem.

"Social consciousness is beginning to see the motion picture as a powerful force recreationally and educationally. The National Board recognizes it as such and has so done since 1909 when it was established by the People's Institute of New York City. Our attempt has been to educate the public mind about the motion picture, and to do so for old and young alike. Through the selection of what is 'good' and 'excellent,' and the bringing of these selections to the attention of the community prior to the local exhibition of films, we have tried to set up the kind of guide that stimulates a public demand for the best films and encourages the public taste to patronize them. By issuing special lists of films calculated to interest children and to stir in them an eagerness to see films that are suitable for their years and yet at the same time show them things of mirth, beauty and meaning in terms of the screen, we have sought, with the help of their parents, to inculcate a liking for

fine films just as one would go about developing in children a taste for good reading. In this connection we must remember that the children of today are the audience of tomorrow, and that there cannot be an intelligent audience unless it is made to demand more and more of the motion picture artistically and educationally as well as from the standpoint of mere entertainment and diversion. Our effort has therefore been to encourage the use of the motion picture by children so as to stir their imagination to create from the images of the screen what we should wish them to create from fine and interesting pictures in galleries and books. This, we think, rather than proscription, should be in the minds of parents whose children love the movies—that attraction should be guided rather than narrowly limited. Our effort in this direction has been assisted in recent months by conducting a Young Reviewers' Club in which large numbers of children are encouraged on a free discussion basis, under their own leadership, to evaluate the films under review. We have learned much from these untrammelled discussions about the real attitudes, reactions and preferences of children and young people generally to the motion picture. We believe that the adult world at large has much to learn in this direction, and that the most of such knowledge will confirm the conviction that the films are not so damaging to children and adolescents after all as some perfectly sincere people would have us believe. In other words, we are trying to avoid loose thinking about the effects of motion pictures by gaining education impartially and at first hand.

"The National Board of Review has concerned itself, equally, with the aesthetic values of the screen through its Committee on Exceptional Photoplays and for the last fifteen years has sought to encourage the little theatre movement of the screen and also the specialized use of the motion picture in the community as a cultural agency.

"The educational feature of motion pictures has been earnestly studied by
(Continued on page 7)

"Our Movie Made Children"

By HENRY JAMES FORMAN

Reviewed by Dr. A. A. BRILL

Dr. Brill as one of the foremost psychiatrists and psychoanalysts is exceptionally well qualified to judge Mr. Forman's interpretations of the researches made under the Payne Fund. He has been connected with educational institutions in New York City in many capacities—as lecturer on psychoanalysis at New York University, as assistant professor of psychiatry at Post Graduate Medical School, and at Columbia University as chief of the psychiatry clinic and as lecturer. In 1926 he became a member of the Better Films National Council of the National Board and is at present a member of its Executive Committee. The following review is the basis of Dr. Brill's statement which recently appeared in the press concerning Mr. Forman's book.

THE title of this book is very intriguing. "Our Movie Made Children" makes one think of a brand new discovery in the science of biology, but such expectations soon vanish when one reads the first page of the introduction by Dr. Charters. One then learns that the author, Henry James Forman, presents here a summary of investigations made from 1929 to 1933, at the request of the Motion Picture Research Council, supported by a fund interested in the radio, moving pictures, and reading in relation to children and youth. As the "youth" is not mentioned in the title, it would seem that Mr. Forman wishes to confine his remarks to movies in relation to children only. Dr. Charters also tells us that Mr. Forman "shows a thorough grasp of the facts and the complicated material of nearly 3,000 pages which constitute the report of the twelve studies," but adds: "His interpretation of the statements, however, his selection of illustrative material, his literary style, his dramatic and emphatic presentation are of necessity entirely his own."

As the author stresses the relation of the movies to children, the question obtrudes itself, "What does he mean by children?" Nor, could we dismiss from our mind this question when we followed the author's clinical presentations. It seems that the author takes a rather broad and general attitude towards the term, "child," in the same way as a mother might speak of her sixty year old son. But psychologically there is an enormous difference between a child up

to the age of four and an adolescent boy or girl of ten or older. The statements cited to show the deleterious effects of movies on children of 12, 13 to over 20 should, therefore, be considerably discounted.

Concerning killing in the movies, boys of 12 say: "Killing reacts on the nervous system." As a neurologist and psychiatrist, I vainly searched my memory for a boy of 12 who would make such a high-brow statement. By contrast the answer of the 13 year old boys was even more surprising. They said: "Too much killing learn you to do stealing." The author also gives statements from delinquent girls who blame the movies for a desire to have pretty clothes, automobiles, and "several other things that make one happy." (This from a 16 year old negro girl, a sexual delinquent). I wonder whether such desires are absent in refined, cultured girls. If they really are, such movies might help them.

Another delinquent girl of 17 stated that the movies "taught me a lot pertaining to men. They have taught me how to kiss, how a girl should appear in the presence of her beau, how a girl should go about loving a fellow," etc. The author adds "A girl like this ought never to see any movies, and least of all such movies whence she gleaned her principles." But, it seems to me that such an education is easily gleaned from reading fine books or moving in nice society. A girl of 17 does not necessarily need the movies to acquire such an education.

The author also quotes the case of a young man of 23, who served a sentence for rape, "in whose conduct and conviction the movies played a pronounced part." In my work with criminals, I have seen cases of rape which concerned men who were brought up in the highest and in the lowest strata of society. In neither case did the movies play any part.

The movies were also blamed by two boys of 16 and 17 for robbery and burglary. But those boys also claimed that *Sonny Boy* and *Say It with*

Song made them feel like being good.

Without going into further details, the movies are blamed for almost every imaginable crime of this civilized community. Children come in contact with a tawdry population, much given to crime and sex. Marriage ceremonies are seldom seen in the movies. Of 16 goals figuring most frequently in 115 pictures listed by Dr. Dale, the first four in their order of frequency are: "1, winning another's love; 2, marriage for love; 3, personal success; 4, happiness of loved ones." Now, what is there wrong about all this?

And, so throughout the whole book the author picks out all kinds of sins to which the child might fall heir through the movies. The movies are blamed for stimulating boys and girls to day-dreaming about the movie hero and heroine. All of which is undoubtedly true. From the beginning of time boys and girls have had day-dreams, which are invariably of an erotic or ambitious nature, but there is nothing wrong about that. In persons of a psychotic make-up, day-dreaming may be highly exaggerated, movies or no movies.

The author seems to ignore the basic idea of the function of the motion pictures. It is my opinion, based on years of experience and study, that the motion pictures furnish the greatest medium for entertainment and education, for besides the love story, which may be stimulating or stupid, even the intelligent layman can cull a lot of pleasure and knowledge from any picture performance. The same can be said of the author's so-called "children." The grown-up and adolescent who are confronted throughout the day with the struggle of inexorable reality find solace, pleasure, and knowledge in almost any movie house. The movie, like the drama and reading, takes us away from the heavy burdens and helps us, as it were, to forget ourselves. In the movie one can identify himself with the hero and live through certain tendencies which are denied in everyday life. Or, the movie may take one away from his monotonous routine, by offering him some fantastic wish realization through Mickey Mouse, or one may see events

and happenings of distant countries and cities. In brief, the movies are not only entertaining, but educational. For the function of education is to impart to the youth the experiences of the past. The individual is handicapped unless he can circulate in the incessant stream of civilization. The auto, the airplane, and the radio by annihilating time and space put an extra strain on the individual. He has to learn and assimilate much more than his forebears of the last century despite the fact that his span of life has not increased. The movies offer the quickest medium for the acquisition of these experiences. Children and adults are surely impressed by everything that they absorb through their senses—movies or no movies, thousands of good and bad impressions crowd themselves into the mind. It does no harm whatever to read or see criminals; on the contrary, the average person learns thereby how to evade evil. For the way of the transgressor is always hard and dreary, even in the movies he is invariably caught, punished or killed. Our well-meaning "would-be" reformers forget that the impression of the occasional criminal movie is heavily counterbalanced by the moral precepts imparted by parents, religion, and social fear. No normal person can be influenced by the movies to do anything wrong that is normally foreign to him. Even if you should hypnotize a normal person and then order him to commit a crime, he will rebel against it while he is hypnotized. Those defectives who are criminally inclined need no movies or hypnotism to influence them into burglaries or rape. Years ago when I was examining delinquents in the New York City Penitentiary and Workhouse, the delinquents were wont to attribute their criminal tendencies to the fact that they had no mothers. Now, it is books and movies. To be sure, the movies are not all perfect, but neither is anything else. Moreover, all the good movies listed in the book contain as much of cruelty, revenge, and lawlessness as most of the bad ones. That "93% of 458 high-school children (I would again suggest that they be called young men and

young women) said that at some time they had been frightened by the movies" does not mean a thing. It does us good to be frightened once in a while. To be good, one must experience the bad. The movies are the safest vicarious experiences for normal young men and women. The movies not only entertain them, but give them a good education in mastering the vicissitudes and hardships of life, which they might have to overcome at the expense of greater cost.

If we follow the implications projected to the reader by Mr. Forman, the movies are in dire need of a thorough reforming. The whole industry should be in the hands of idealists who would produce only such movies as measure up to those highest social goals established by Dr. Dale in his study treated in Mr. Forman's book. Second, a board of psychiatrists should be stationed at the entrance of every movie house in order to determine the mental and emotional fitness of every applicant for admission to a particular movie. For Mr. Forman bewails the fact that "all movies are open wide alike to moron and philosopher." May I interrupt here to ask What is a moron? The psychiatrists do not seem to know it. And, what is a philosopher? If the above mentioned measures could be put into operation, all would be well with the movie industry and our children would grow up into ideal beings.

Psychologically speaking, there is nothing in this book that offers anything new or scientific about movies or children. Most of the statements are vague and unproven. To be sure, it is not possible to say whether the original material upon which the author based this volume offers anything of real value, but judging the book, as such, the reviewer feels that the author's conception of the emotional needs of young people leaves much to be desired.

(Continued from page 4)

the Board. Through special lists available to schools and teachers we have tried to be of service to those already interested in using films as a teaching tool

and aid in visual education and to develop a public and professional awareness of the great values which the motion picture represents in the training of our youth. Primarily this is a problem in public education—in adult education.

"The above are the efforts represented by the National Board's community program for the social use of motion pictures, a program followed in whole or in part by numerous communities throughout the country today.

"The National Board naturally believes in study and investigation. But it also believes in practical experience. Many worthy studies have been undertaken. But the finding of facts cannot be achieved rapidly out of one study or many. Conclusions must not be hastily drawn. It is necessary to bring into perspective the whole relationship between experimental study in the field of social science and the body of practical knowledge which has evolved out of clinical experience. Interesting as the result of recent studies are, the only contribution they make to any thinking about motion pictures is to confirm what we already know, but they create a danger sometimes by placing upon these facts an interpretation that prejudices our little learning rather than helps us to an intelligent solution of the problems involved. What is to be avoided is a negative approach to the social implications of our most thoroughly American form of recreation, such as reveals no disposition to appraise those values which have made motion pictures popular with children and adults alike. If we cannot perceive those values, how can we ever develop the motion picture in those fields of education and culture and specialized social use which are so important in the *whole* growth of the motion picture as a medium of communication?

"As the newly-elected Chairman of the National Board of Review, I look forward with great interest to the task of helping to work out further some of the problems with regard to the public and the films, clarification of which the National Board in its long, honorable and painstaking career has done so much to bring about."

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Berkeley Square

Adapted by Sonya Levien and John L. Balderston from the play by John L. Balderston, directed by Frank Lloyd, photographed by Ernest Palmer, musical direction by Louis De Francesco. Produced and distributed by Fox Film Corporation.

The cast

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Peter Standish..... | Leslie Howard |
| Helen Pettigrew..... | Heather Angel |
| Kate Pettigrew..... | Valerie Taylor |
| Lady Ann Pettigrew..... | Irene Browne |
| Tom Pettigrew..... | Colin Keith-Johnston |
| Major Clinton..... | Alan Mowbray |
| Mr. Throstle..... | Ferdinand Gottschalk |
| Duchess of Devonshire..... | Juliette Compton |
| Mrs. Barwick..... | Beryl Mercer |
| Sir Joshua Reynolds..... | Olaf Hytten |
| Lord Stanley..... | David Torrence |
| Marjorie Frost..... | Betty Lawford |

Berkeley Square is a love story in the fourth dimension—which needn't bother even the least mathematical minded, as the metaphysics, reduced to the minimum required for understanding what is going on, is sufficiently dressed out in the language of sentiment to make it as simple as *Smiling Through*. Even if some people think the picture is a sort of romantic ghost story it will not matter, the romance being so evident and so effective.

The play from which the film was made had a plot not unlike the one more recently used in *Turn Back the Clock*: a man goes back into the past without losing his memories of the present—a fulfillment of the frequent wish "If I could only go through it all again, knowing what I know now!" Lee Tracy turned back the clock through the sufficiently

plausible expedient of a dream while under anaesthetic. Leslie Howard goes back to old Berkeley Square to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning and shivery music, with no more explanation than the inference that time—God's time—is a dimension of space, and that he took some steps backward in it. No other explanation, of course, is required.

Peter Standish is a twentieth century American with a yearning interest in the eighteenth century. His English ancestors of that time seem to him to have lived in the golden age—the ideal age for quiet, lovely existence. When he inherits an old house in London's Berkeley Square and begins to bury himself in the diary and surroundings of his earlier namesake, he becomes so lost to the modern world that his fiancée thinks he is a little mad. Mad or not, he has a firm conviction that at a certain hour he will step back into the days of George the Third—and when the hour strikes he is another Peter Standish, in peruke and knee-breeches, newly arrived on the American packet for a visit to London just after the Revolution. In body and all outward appearance he is the Peter who is expected by his Pettigrew cousins, but his mind is the mind of the modern Peter, acquainted with the period into which he has projected himself only through what he remembers of history and what he has learned from his ancestor's diary. But history can't, and doesn't, repeat itself. Peter's modern

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Cavalcade
Hell on Earth
Ivan
M

Morgenrot
Poil de Carotte
The Private Life of Henry VIII
Topaze
Zoo in Budapest

Honorable Mention
Der Hauptmann von Koepenick
Hertha's Erwachen
Night Flight

mind, looking out at the older world, cannot help betraying its modernity, and the girl he is destined to marry, like most of the others, comes to the horrified belief that he is perhaps insane and surely devil-ridden and bewitched. The only one who sympathizes with him is her sister Helen, in whom a mystic strain not only makes her understand him but able to see dimly into the future as he once saw into the past. He and Helen fall in love—and there is no happy way out for them, because really, in history, Peter did not marry Helen but her sister. Peter can only go back to his own century, there to live on memories, and the original Peter whose place he usurped for a while evidently regained his own body and carried on the Standish line as per the family records.

The picturing of this story is delightfully done, with charming atmosphere, much spirit and wit, and the moving glamor of delicate romance. It leaves out the dirt and squalor which made the eighteenth century such a disappointment to Peter Standish, but of course there wasn't much space for that in a tale not devoted to a comparison of social conditions but to a love story. One has a passing feeling, however, that it was a bit unfair to show, through Helen's vision, only the ugliness of modern life and gloss over all the miseries in which Helen lived. That vision of Helen's, by the way, might have been managed with more imagination: to splatter the screen with a lot of whirling, superimposed pictures was an effective camera trick once, but it lost its force when it lost its novelty.

The strength, as well as the charm, of the film depends mostly on the feeling it puts over, and that, being in the hands of Leslie Howard and a most competent cast, leaves nothing to wish for. Mr. Howard does not only the obvious things well, but he is particularly good in the difficult matter of showing how Peter's modern mind works under its ancient head-gear. You can see his brain fumbling and hesitating, trying not to betray itself in speech. It is the most worthwhile part Mr. Howard has had in films, to go along with his parts in *Outward*

Bound and Reserved for Ladies as delightful memories.
J. S. H.

Private Life of Henry VIII

Written by Lajos Biro and Arthur Wimperis, directed by Alexander Korda, photographed by Osmond Borodaille. Produced by London Films Productions, Ltd., distributed by United Artists.

The cast

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Henry VIII..... | Charles Laughton |
| Anne Boleyn..... | Merle Oberon |
| Jane Seymour..... | Wendy Barrie |
| Katheryn Howard..... | Binnie Barnes |
| Anne of Cleves..... | Elsa Lanchester |
| Katherine Parr..... | Everley Gregg |
| Henry's old nurse..... | Lady Tree |
| Thomas Culpepper..... | Robert Donat |
| Cromwell..... | Franklyn Dyall |
| Wriothesly..... | Miles Mander |
| Cranmer..... | Laurence Hanray |
| Holbein..... | John Turnbull |

THE private life of King Henry the Eighth of course suggests only one thing, his six wives. Any one wife would make a drama in herself, and quite aside from wives—though they seem to be pretty inextricably mixed up in everything he did—there are other aspects of his kingship that are more important historically than his marriages. When Henry came to the throne of England, the second Tudor, England was a minor kingdom in Europe, and the Tudor hold upon the scepter was far from firm; Henry not only established the Tudors strongly, but against two of the wildest rulers the Holy Roman Empire and France had ever had he made England one of the European Big Three. There was also his establishing the Church of England as against the Church of Rome, and all that that meant to England then and ever since.

Altogether too full and busy a life to be covered completely by any single film. The creators of *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, with an eye to unity, brevity and entertainment, have chosen to present certain highlights of his marital adventures in a manner not too solemn. The result is something to confound those who, having forgotten or never seen *The Battle of Gallipoli*, are always saying the English cannot make good movies.

It is a gay picture, recreating the pre-Puritan times when Merrie England was



Charles Laughton, vividly bringing Tudor England to life in, "*The Private Life of Henry VIII.*"

really merry—among other things. Henry appears as bluff King Hal, his petulance, lechery and craftiness glossed over by a sort of likable childishness. The first glimpse of him is his impatient waiting till the signal comes that the headsman has finished with Anne Boleyn, while Jane Seymour is donning her bridal robes. Then when Jane's brief life ends in giving him the all-important heir, there is the devious flirtation with Katheryn Howard, with the comic interlude of Anne of Cleves. With Anne amicably disposed of the second Katheryn becomes the fifth queen, with whom the picture makes Henry appear to be definitely and deeply in love. In her deceit he really suffers, and her punishment has its tragedy for him as well as for her. But now the years are upon him, and the picture ends quickly on an almost low comedy note, Henry by his fireside and the competent Katherine Parr competently henpecking him. Even in that well-

nigh senile figure there is still something of the little boy.

Only by treating Henry lightly could so much sympathy have been aroused for him and made the Bluebeard of English history, with all his strutting and chicanery, strike one as not a villain. Which of course he wasn't, any more than any man of like capacity in his position in his times would have been. And, of course, by presenting Henry thus, the picture shows only one view of him, and a limited one. One need only recall Lubitsch's *Anne Boleyn* (which somehow came to be called *Deception* in this country) and Emil Jannings' unforgettable performance in it, to see how much more meat there is in the life and character of the father of the great Elizabeth than this film comes anywhere near suggesting.

But it has a convincing atmosphere, with Hampton Court and the Tower and Henry hawking and Henry's royal din-

ners and dances. The actors seem to live in their clothes instead of having merely donned them for a costume movie. In sum, the picture moves, with a credible semblance of life.

All the actors are well chosen, and the queens, in particular, are a gallery worth any amateur historian's scrutiny. But the outstanding figure is naturally Henry in the person of Charles Laughton, who might have been created by Holbein himself to look this part upon the screen. Mr. Laughton plays the king with great cleverness and good humor, in a style that begets good humor in his audience. One can feel that Henry really was like this—and there is yet the feeling that Henry was something more which Mr. Laughton has missed. Henry wrestling and Henry riding—as Mr. Laughton wrestles and rides—is a shade too humorous, and there is something of the effect of an amateur exhibitionist—like Nero—about it. Above all, Henry was surely a more masculine man than this. But Mr. Laughton's performance will attract and convince people who were blind to the excellence he put into *Payment Deferred*, and spread appreciation of one of the most competent impersonators on the English or American screen. J. S. H.

Night Flight

Adapted from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's 1931 *Prix Femina* novel by Oliver H. P. Garrett, directed by Clarence Brown, photographed by Oliver T. Marsh, aerial photography by Elmer Dwyer and Charles Marshall, musical score by Herbert Stothart. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Riviere | John Barrymore |
| Madame Fabian..... | Helen Hayes |
| Fabian | Clarke Gable |
| Pellerin | Robert Montgomery |
| Robineau | Lionel Barrymore |
| Brazilian pilot..... | William Gargan |
| Brazilian pilot's wife..... | Myrna Loy |
| Radio operator | Leslie Fenton |
| Radio operator | Frank Conroy |
| Daudet | C. Henry Gordon |
| Roblet | Harry Beresford |
| Pilot No. 5..... | Ralf Harolde |

ONE of the striking things about this picture, though it does not strike one except as an after-thought, is that its heavy weight of stars does not submerge the story into a sec-

ondary thing. It is hard not to think of Barrymores as Barrymores, or Helen Hayes or Myrna Loy as actresses from whom something definitely individual is always to be expected, yet all these strong personalities have somehow been made to fuse into the total production so that none of them obtrude. One remembers *Night Flight* for its theme and the emotions stirred by that theme, not for its high-powered cast of players.

We have had air mail pictures before, and of course "the mail must go through!" is always at the heart of them. That same heroic slogan is the theme of this film, but this film goes deeper because it dramatizes the machinery that operates that slogan, and the people of all grades and kinds who are cogs in that machine. No one person may get in the way of efficiency, whatever private woes it costs him.

Everything in the picture happens in a single day and night, during the first day-and-night airmail flight across South America. The double conflict that makes the drama strangely intense is between the airmail system and the elements, and between the airmail system and those men and women whose lives are involved in it. Storm and human nature both threaten the success of the important flight, and human determination and courage defeat those threats.

The push and drive of the machine comes from the director of the company, to whom the smooth functioning of the schedule is the test that will prove his company the equal of the companies of Europe and the United States. It isn't only the vanity of a creator that makes him harden all his human impulses to the one end of making his machine work perfectly for its own sake—he has an almost mystic sense of the need for such a machine in the modern world, with numberless unknown things depending everywhere on the prompt efficiency of the mail service. For the sake of that vast unseen multitude he must keep all human weaknesses out of his organization—no pity, no leniency, no least sacrifice of clock-like promptitude, not even wind and lightning, must be allowed to cause an instant's slow-

up in the machine's smooth working.

So we have the whole flight, with its progress reproduced on a map in the director's office by little lights flashing the arrival of planes at their successive destinations—the pilot flying through the sudden storm in the Andes, the pilot lost amid clouds and lightning, out of his course above the sea, the wife waiting for her lost husband, the wife who cannot understand the strange duality that makes her husband love his home intensely and yet able to forget home entirely in the fascination of his job, all the office force with their different personalities and foibles, caught up in the tension of getting the planes through on time. It makes a tension keyed to a keen pitch, and as an added fillip the audience knows, though none of the company knows, that a child's life depends on the prompt arrival of some serum sent from the west coast. That is one of the things for which the machine must function, whether it knows about it or not.

It is in the sense this film conveys of human beings caught in the swift machinery of modern living that *Night Flight* soars above other pictures of its kind. The production is of course beautifully adequate in its photography and settings and especially in the workman-like effectiveness of its scenario. The cast, with all its resplendent names, might have been more of a hindrance than a help—high-calibered stars have a way of knocking the values of a story out of gear with their over-accented personalities; but Clarence Brown has achieved something like a miracle of fusion in keeping his cast subordinate to his story without sacrificing any of their excellence as actors. Even so, it is sometimes hard not to be conscious of the ghosts of other pictures hovering too near—one has seen the Barrymores so many, many times, for instance, that every new film they appear in is haunted with echoes of other films.

Two moments this reviewer will remember for a long time—Robert Montgomery safe on the ground again after his flight through the Andean storm, and the pitiful gleam of the search-flare drift-

ing down through the clouds to the tossing ocean. They are moments eloquent with unsayable things. J. S. H.

Sound Cartoons and Screen Art

NOT long ago at the Roxy Theatre here in New York City, I saw Walt Disney's color cartoon comedy *Three Little Pigs* for the seventh time. My previous views of the Silly Symphony had been in different Broadway theatres where I am accustomed to ramble. During the past summer several theatres have held over various cartoon comedies more than one week, and *Three Little Pigs* has proved so popular that three theatres I know are loathe to let it leave their screens. For the second week at the Roxy Walt Disney's charming musical porkers and the big bad wolf continue to pack them in. Yesterday, at the end of the showing an announcement was flashed: "If you would like to see *Three Little Pigs* next week, kindly indicate by applause." The audience took the hint and responded heartily, showing that as far as they were concerned the wolf and his would-be victims were a howling success.

I am quite ready to agree with the critics who said that sound cartoons are the greatest single contribution of screen art. What are some of the arguments that may be marshalled for such a view?

The comic strip in newspaper has long been the most widely read section of the daily press. Starting with this established feature, movies have added to it motion and sound, two things that add immeasurably to cartoon realism. The imaginative appeal of the drama, the dance and music have been fused into a form that appeals to something poetical in the hearts of all ages. Here, then, is the primary explanation for the appeal of "Mickey Mouse," the "Silly Symphonies," "Merrie Melodies," "Talkartoons" and others.

Then there is the appeal of personality. Mickey Mouse, through repeated appearances over a period of years has become a national character and the favorite movie star of millions because he speaks

in the universal language—the language of pantomime that made Chaplin the world's most beloved actor. Mickey Mouse is always consistent in his inconsistency: one may always expect him to do the unexpected in a way that is entirely captivating. Mickey delights in obstacles that would perplex an ordinary mouse. In fact he accomplishes things that would stump a superhuman magician with a college education. Regardless of his foe, whether it be an armored knight in search of beastly laurels or a rapacious giant looking for a mously meal, Mickey always enters the fray with a nose keen for the combat. And the audience thrills to the fact that, no matter how desperate the struggle, Mickey always emerges with banners flying and the well-won Minnie at his side.

Is it surprising, then, that children call him cute, adults say he is clever, and everybody thinks Mickey is grand, simply because, being true to his own irrepressible character, he cannot be false to any man.

That other cartoons should attain popularity similar to *Three Little Pigs* would not be surprising to me as I have seen in the past some that I consider equally amusing, such as *The Pied Piper*, *Flowers and Trees* and *The Dish That Ran Away with the Spoon*, (a "Merrie Melody"). These are all delightful and can be enjoyed regardless of language, time or place.

Because of their meticulous, cameo-like construction and the fact that they are short enough to be choice morsels in screen entertainment, cartoon comedies are well on the way to establishing a separate department of screen art, wherein the audience may demand the repetition of favorite numbers, just as the devotee of music has his classical melodies which are standard and which form part of his real education.

One of the tests of true art is: Can it be enjoyed over and over again without depreciating in value? The great classics in literature, music, painting and sculpture have gained prestige because vast numbers of people in every generation have delighted in their presence not

once, but many times, thus giving them the stamp of excellence through the years. Sound cartoons seem to be likely candidates for the honors of true art as they are standing the acid tests of time and repetition. If, over a period of many weeks, you can see a single cartoon seven times and like it better each time, it must have some of the qualities of the artistic.

It seems to me that the entire motion picture industry can learn something from the success of Mickey Mouse and his brethren. First is the obvious fact that the widest appeal of the film is in pantomime fused with imaginative sounds (music) that have been created especially for the picture. Motion pictures will succeed as an art in the future only to the extent that action and sound are blended to appeal to the imaginative needs of an audience that has come into the theatre to laugh, cry and be amused emotionally and intellectually. ARTHUR L. MARBLE

Mr. Marble lends his interest to review work and other phases of motion picture activity. Through his special interest in visual education he has served as editor of the Educational Department of the Photo-Era Magazine.

LAST month we announced that an experiment was being tried in eliminating the Selected Pictures Guide from the Magazine, believing that our readers would find the weekly information as it appears in the Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures of much more service to them. In answer to our requests for opinions from our readers we have received a number, some approving the change and others voicing their desire for the continuation of the Guide, even if the information is not so current. While waiting for more thoughts on the subject we are again in this issue simply listing the selected pictures of the month (see page 2—Guide to Selected Pictures), perhaps next month will find the reviews reinstated. But whether the Selected Pictures Guide is included in the Magazine or not the Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures is found very necessary by many groups, as they must have the most up-to-date information on the new releases, so it is made available to Magazine subscribers at the special rate of \$1.00. Send for a free sample copy of the Guide.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

FAMILY night programs were started under the guidance of the Better Films Council of Rochester, N. Y., in January, 1932. The opening program as reported by Mrs. Hugh A. Smith, able president of the Council, included *Tabu*, *Penrod and Sam* and a Mickey Mouse cartoon. The Council considered this family program which ran on a Friday and a Saturday, with the addition of a playlet, "The Puppet Princess" by the Children's Drama League on Saturday afternoon, somewhat too long, but so pleased were they to get the showings under way they conceded to this lengthy program to please the management of the interestedly cooperating Monroe Theatre.

Wide publicity for this family night was secured through the very cooperative Rochester newspapers. It was mentioned in a number of churches—an interesting example is the following from the Bulletin of the Third Presbyterian Church: "The Better Films Council is endorsing a 'Family Night' program at the Monroe Theatre on Friday and Saturday, January 15th and 16th, with a Saturday matinee. The feature pictures will be *Penrod and Sam* and *Tabu*, a South Sea Island picture. The shorter features have been carefully selected. The Council asks that you patronize this performance so that the management will feel encouraged to have other selected, 'Family Night' programs." The program for the second family night was *Sooky and Heaven on Earth*.

A further activity receiving the attention of the Council at that time was the showing of some exceptional pictures at the Little Theatre. *Five Star Final* and *The Mystery of Life* were shown, the latter running for three weeks. Later showings were *Road to Life* and *Zwei Menschen*. *I Am from Siam* was another program feature. The brother of the Council president who had lived six years in Siam spoke one night in connection with this film—another instance of effectively linking community and individual interests. The manager of the Little Theatre at one time made an offer

to various clubs to have tickets printed and sold on the percentage basis. The Women's Overseas League and the D. A. R. sponsored *The Viking*. In March the Council assisted the Little Theatre in its presentation of the musical film *Pagliacci*, made by the San Carlos Grand Opera Company. Working with the Council on this were various specialized groups—for example, the Italian Woman's Club and an Eastman School sorority. One night, designated as social night, girls from the University of Rochester acted as ushers. In this way, it was reported, the film was brought before those who would be especially interested in it and the Council through its cooperation netted a "tidy" sum for some very necessary expenses.

Speakers at the various Council meetings were representatives of the Eastman Teaching Films, the Western Electric Research Products, both showing films in conjunction with their talks, Wilton A. Barrett of the National Board of Review, George J. Zehrung, of the Motion Picture Bureau of the Y. M. C. A., and a number of the local theatre managers. The theatre managers are most cooperative in every way, one example was a special invitation showing of the *Congorilla* film which had been recommended as a junior matinee picture. Fine cooperation is always forthcoming too from the local newspapers and speakers have been the dramatic critics of the Democrat and Chronicle and Times-Union. Recently the Democrat and Chronicle made the following announcement showing the attention which they consider due the Photoplay Guide: "As a test of the highest degree of its serviceability, the list of selected and recommended motion pictures heretofore published on Thursdays by the Rochester Better Films Council, in cooperation with the National Board of Review, will be printed on the theatre page on Mondays. The president of the Council, favors giving the change of publication day a trial." The June 1933 supper meeting held at the Baptist Temple was addressed by Professor Al-

onzo Grace of the Education Department of the University of Rochester, who conducted a round table discussion on "Motion Picture Selection and Appreciation."

Some of the Rochester organizations represented on the Better Films Council are: Elmira College Club, Smith College Club, Chamber of Commerce, Council for Better Citizenship, Y. M. C. A., Department of Parental Education of the Board of Education and the University of Rochester, State Federation of Music Clubs, Y. W. C. A., Parent-Teacher Association, various church groups, New York League of Women Voters, Rochester Teachers Association and the Children's Drama League.

THE Tampa (Fla.) Better Films Council resumed for the season 1932-33 its special showings of pictures for children. The first one of these was held October 15th. The programs aim to exclude the love interest and to feature sports and adventure. They include music, mass singing, a news-reel, a comedy and a feature. It has been found that the children best appreciate comedies with plenty of slapstick and hard riding western features.

The admission price for these shows was 10c until the Committee in January announced a 5c show worked out with the cooperation of the Council and the local Tampa Tribune comic column. Mrs. N. W. Hensley, active chairman of this Council, said at that time that the "Kayo Club" resulting was expected to meet with the approval of both parents and children and to permit many a youngster who otherwise might not be able to attend to enjoy one of these special showings.

WHAT more outstanding achievement has there been in the last century of progress than the motion picture? And so it is fitting that the motion picture should, as it does, serve many purposes in the Century of Progress Exposition at Chicago. One use which has been brought especially to our attention is the showing of the peace film *Must War Be*. This film produced by the Peace Films Foundation, Inc., was announced for daily showing in the Hall of Religion.

The League of Nations Association, Midwest Institute of International Relations, Women's International League and Youth Peace Council are the organizations cooperating with the Peace Films Foundation in sponsoring the showing. Through the motion picture at the exposition the most effective present day method and means have been utilized by these organizations for extending their world wide interest.

BOOKS, books have you any books? If so, why not share them, especially if they are surplus books. And why not make the theatre the medium of distribution? This idea was cleverly carried out by an alert exhibitor in Middletown, Ohio, at the beginning of this fall school season.

The newspapers and the interested public working with the exhibitor assured the success of the scheme. Free admission at a special matinee was given to all boys and girls bringing used text books for distribution by the local Board of Education to children who could not afford to purchase them. The newspapers gave front page space to the story and listed the text books desired. The children were asked to fill out a newspaper coupon with their names and addresses, to be brought to the theatre box office two days before the special matinee. Six hundred youngsters attended the showing resulting in quite a stack of books, which was assembled in the lobby, for the needy children of the community.

It is too late in the year for Better Films Councils to use this idea for school opening but it can, with books other than text books, be made a part of any Book Week or Education Week programs. These two special observances come in November, Education Week, November 6th to 12th and Book Week, November 12th to 18th. Or it can be used as a holiday matinee idea or stored away for a new semester activity early in 1934 when changed school books are needed.

The National Board has compiled five special lists of films, for Book Week and other occasions. Write for details.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committee affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

National Board of Review of Motion Pictures,
 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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December, 1933



Jo and Laurie in "Little Women" (see page 9)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through cooperation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Guide to Selected Pictures

The Selected Pictures Guide which was omitted from the last two issues of the Magazine, with the thought that the Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures might supply the necessary information, has been reinstated in this issue. It will be found on page 14 containing the selected features for the month of November. The selected short subjects are listed here as follows:

SHORT SUBJECTS

| | |
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| Air Tonic | Little Boy Blue |
| Around the Calendar | Little Miss Mischief |
| Autobuyography | March of the Years No. 4 |
| Byways in Bankok | Merry Old Soul |
| Cuba | Million Dollar Melody |
| A Day in Tokyo | Mister Adam |
| A Day in Venice | Movie Memories |
| Divorce Sweets | Not the Marrying Kind |
| Easy Aces | Notre Dame Glee Club |
| Eddie Duchin and His | Paramount Pictorial No. 5 |
| Orchestra | The Pawnshop |
| Frozen Assets | The Pet Store |
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| Jack Denny and His | Queen |
| Band | What Fur |
| Kid 'n Africa | What Price Speed |
| The Last Dogie | What's to Do |
| Laughs in the Law | The Wolf Dog Nos. 6-11 |
| Leave It to Dad | World Flight |

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December, 1933

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We Announce Two Elections

THE National Board of Review takes pride and deep satisfaction in announcing that Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Resident Bishop of the New York Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is



Bishop Francis J. McConnell

now a member of its General Committee. The eminence of this distinguished man, the breadth and depth of his character and mind, will add lustre to the roster of those representative men and women whose efforts and interests as members give prestige to our organization, and his influence is sure to be important in increasing the appreciation of

THE Executive Committee of the National Board of Review announces the election of the eminent psychiatrist and psychologist, Dr. A. A. Brill, to membership in that body. Dr. Brill has served on the National Board for about seven years. During that time he has been active in the work of the organization in its opposition to censorship and as an exponent of its field program in relation to constructive community functioning. He will be remembered by the field members for his notable address at the Annual Luncheon in 1926.



Dr. A. A. Brill

Bishop McConnell

the value of the motion picture when put to its best uses. His attitude on the fundamental question of censorship can be read in a quotation to be found in Roger Baldwin's article later in these pages.

Francis J. McConnell was born in Trinway, Ohio, on August 18, 1871. His A.B. at Ohio Wesleyan, was the first of many degrees that include a S. T. B. from Boston University, a Ph.D. and D.D. from Ohio Wesleyan and a L.L.D. from Yale. After pastorates in Massachusetts—West Chelmsford, Newton Upper Falls, Ipswich and Cambridge—and in Brooklyn, he was President of De Pauw University from 1909 to 1912. In 1912 he was elected a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Since then he has been President of the Religious Education Association, President of the Federal Council of Churches in America, the Lyman Beecher lecturer at Yale, and honorary trustee of the Chatauqua Institute.

He is the author of many books, among them "The Diviner Immanence," "Religious Certainty," "Christian Focus," "The Increase of Faith," "Personal Christianity," "Understanding the Scriptures," "Democratic Christianity," "Public Opinion and Theology," "The Preacher and the People," "Is God Limited?," "The Christlike God," "Borden Parker Browne" and "The Prophetic Ministry."

The Juniors Review Motion Pictures

THE Young Reviewers Club, representing the Juniors' Review of the National Board, has been re-organized and the activity inaugurated for 1933-34. The past year saw an outstanding development in this work with boys and girls from over fifty schools and boys' and girls' clubs participating. The technique used was that of ballots and free discussion conducted by leaders chosen from the members. The data arising from this method has been tabulated and now awaits trained analysis.

The work for the coming season will progress along a line of technique designed for accumulation of further data scientifi-

Dr. A. A. Brill

Born in Austria, Dr. Brill came to America at an early age and was educated at Columbia University. Since 1903 he has been actively engaged in the practice of psychiatry and has held numerous important positions—among them that of chief of the psychiatric clinic and lecturer on psychoanalysis, Columbia University; lecturer on abnormal psychology and psychoanalysis, New York University; assistant professor of psychiatry, Post Graduate Hospital; member of psychiatric clinic in Zurich, Switzerland. At present Dr. Brill is the president of the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry, the New York and the American Psychoanalytic Associations, and vice-president of the American Psychiatric Association.

As the protagonist of Freud in America and the translator of many of his works, Dr. Brill's interest in the films naturally pertains to the field of attitudes and reactions as related to the psychological background. He is, however, greatly interested in the whole social aspect of the motion picture.

As a member of the Executive Committee, his services will prove invaluable, and his interest in such phases of the work as the Young Reviewers' Club, and the fostering of the educational use of films, because of his long study and consequent wide knowledge of the human mind, will assist in the development of a scientific viewpoint and a scientific technique. The Executive Committee feels itself fortunate in numbering Dr. Brill among its members.

cally gathered. The Young Reviewers Club will include children from eight to fourteen years of age. They will be divided into two groups—one composed of boys and girls from eight to ten, the other those from eleven to fourteen. A study will be made of their reactions in relation to their environments. A large group of children have already been enlisted who will engage in the study with their parents' consent. They have been designated by schools and other groups whose work is with children. Dr. Frank Astor, Dr. A. A. Brill, and Dr. Frederick Thrasher will develop the technique and contribute their supervising services.

"What Shocked the Censors"

Reviewed by ROGER N. BALDWIN

MOST critics of movie censorship have indulged in generalizations, with only random information as to what the state censors actually cut out. Now for the first time a booklet reveals the actual cuts made by the New York State censors in 335 films over a fifteen months' period up to March, 1933. The cuts cover the official record in monthly mimeographed form, finally released by the New York State censors after a fight in the 1932 legislature by the National Council on Freedom from Censorship. Although the bill to make the records public failed, the Board of Regents later agreed to release them.

The Council has now published the cuts in alphabetical order covering 82 pages of a 100-page booklet, with a foreword by Prof. Hatcher Hughes, chairman of the Council, and an introduction by Prof. Edward C. Lindeman, discussing the philosophy and effect of censorship.

The National Council on Freedom from Censorship was organized several years ago by the American Civil Liberties Union to specialize in the varied censorships affecting movies, radio, the stage and publications. It works for the complete abolition of all forms of censorship in advance of showing or publication, and for control of alleged indecency or obscenity solely through prosecutions with trial by jury. Juries, the Council holds, are better judges of the current sense of morals than professional censors. The Council is committed to the abolition of all the six state movie censor boards, and is planning to back a bill in the next New York legislature, as in the last, to abolish the board. The booklet is published to reveal the actual work of the board in the belief that public opinion will condemn it as useless.

Prominently quoted is an opinion on the cuts by Bishop Francis J. McConnell of the Methodist Church, who says: "The trouble I have with the idea of censorship is that formal censorship puts the seal of official approval on what is left after the censor has done his work. Anyone who reads the

excisions made by the censors feels that the cutting is wholly of superfluities. The fundamental conception of the theme may be wrong. To say of a bad play that it is passed by the Board of Censors after deletions puts sanction on what remains. The good done by the excision does not outweigh the evil done by what at least appears to be found approved."

Prof. Lindeman in an analysis of the work of the New York censors shows that 38.5% of all feature films, over one-third, were either rejected entirely or cut by the censors. Thirteen of the 335 films were rejected.

The analysis of the reasons for the rejections and cuts show that 44% have to do with references to sex and 45% with crime or violence—an almost equal division between the two. Only a small proportion of the cuts had to do with government or religion, 8% altogether. Prof. Lindeman points out that the press is free to publish articles and print pictures in these same categories and with much the same implications. Answering the argument that pictures are more suggestive in their effects, particularly on the minds of children, he counters by putting upon parents the responsibility of directing the "appropriate entertainment for their children," and pointing out that "if censorship were removed, the practice of announcing endorsement of films by advisory agencies would become far more common and effective."

Examination of the cuts shows that the censors eliminate from sex subjects not portrayals of immoral relations, which are often passed, but favorable or jocular treatment of such relations. Sex talk regarded as too slangy or vulgar is also cut. Nudity is regarded as indecent exposure in the case of dark-skinned peoples. Even the sexual characters of children or a mother nursing a child at her breast are eliminated.

Contrary to popular impression, censorship of crime and violence is even more sweeping than of sex. Practically everything picturing the actual commission of

criminal or violent acts is cut out. Apparently the censors believe that technique is easily imparted to potential young criminals, but actual crimes and their effects are all portrayed even where details are suppressed. The censors are also sensitive to the suggestion of graft and corruption in public life. Public officials must not be represented as venal. The third-degree is not recognized. Profanity is out of course, as well as anything likely to arouse criticism from conventional religious sources.

The Council points out in introducing the record that readers will find many cuts which seem entirely proper. But readers are urged to compare cuts with the matter left in and therefore approved. Little distinction in character is found between what goes out and what stays in. The Council also points out that if the cuts made in a particular film in all six states with censorship could be portrayed in parallel col-

umns, the film would be emasculated beyond recognition.

But worst of all, says the Council, is the fact that censorship does not touch the major evils inherent in the treatment of themes according to what the producers think the censors want. "Virtue," the Council points out, "must always be rewarded; sin and crime always punished. Moral lessons must be taught, if not in newspapers and magazines and on the stage, at least in the movies."

Although only a small edition of the booklet has been printed, it has had wide notice in the press and magazines as the first authoritative document revealing what the movie censors actually do.

Gordon W. Moss, the secretary of the Council arranged the material for publication. Copies may be obtained from the National Council on Freedom from Censorship, 100 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C. Price \$1.00.

Books on the Motion Picture

FROM the number of questions and inquiries which come to us there are many people apparently who wish to do more than merely see the movies, they wish to read them as well, or rather read about them. And they ask where shall we turn to read of such subjects as the history, development and appreciation of the motion picture. In answer we refer them to various books, which have been reviewed in past issues of our National Board of Review Magazine, as the most reliable and interesting sources of such information. Thinking that there may be others who desire this information but who have not voiced their question, we are listing below a number of the outstanding books on different phases of motion picture interest, with excerpts from the reviews which were published in the Magazine. These go back to 1923 but in a study for general knowledge the point is not how current is a book but how dependable and well presented its subject matter. Here are some that have been recommended as possessing these values.

"A Million and One Nights"

By Terry Ramsaye

The task of the reviewer is considerably simplified when the book before him is the only one which exhaustively covers a new field in pioneer fashion. Such is the case with "A Million and One Nights." Mr. Ramsaye has undertaken to report the history of the motion picture. He has treated his task like an ideal assignment in a grand wish-fulfillment of the reporter's dream to have his article start with a headline across the entire page and running on to unlimited pages, with no editor to cramp his style and no make-up man to crimp his space. His history of the motion picture is a journalistic marathon. He investigates the invention of the motion picture as a mechanical device while watching it develop as a business and a new economic giant. He examines its claim to art and seeks to interpret its psychology. He studies it from the sociological aspect and views without alarm its ever increasing hold upon our life. In touching upon the social aspects of the

motion picture, he suggests a very intriguing theory. Always he is arresting and informative.

Reviewed, February, 1927.

2 vols. 1927. Simon and Schuster, New York.

"The Film Till Now—A Survey of the Cinema"

By Paul Rotha

Mr. Rotha is one of the more articulate critics of the cinema, who has been writing about films for several years in England. He is deeply and studiously interested in the motion picture as a unique medium of dramatic expression. This new book of his is one of the most readable, and one of the best, that has been published on the subject of motion pictures. Two-thirds of it is devoted to what he calls "Part One—The Actual." The other third is concerned with "The Theoretical." Under "The Actual" he describes the development of the film and the various forms of cinema, and then examines . . . the films of different countries. This examination is both general and specific, and manages to give some idea of most of the important films that have been made as well as to analyze growths and tendencies. The theoretical part of the book studies the aim of the film in general and in particular. Anyone whose interest in motion pictures goes beyond merely liking to see them will find a great deal that is useful and a great deal that is stimulating in this book.

Reviewed, March, 1931.

1931. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, N. Y. C.

"Film Year Book" 1933

The fifteenth edition of the Film Year Book published annually by the Film Daily, has made its appearance. It contains more than a thousand pages of motion picture information and is a reliable ready reference book when in need of data on films, film activity and film personalities. For buyer, seller, exhibitor, student and patron of the motion picture there is something in this encyclopedic volume.

Film Daily. New York.

"An Hour with the Movies and the Talkies"

By Gilbert Seldes

This small but compact volume sets itself two queries to answer: Why has no figure comparable to Chaplin in slapstick comedy appeared in any of the other types of the movies? and Has the movie come to its natural end with the talking picture? Mr. Seldes is a keen and intelligent observer of the movies. His examination of the two queries takes him into a survey of the whole history of movies. The result is interesting, enlightening and entertaining. It may be divulged that his answer to question number two is "No"—how he arrives at it is something everyone critically interested in the screen ought to read.

Reviewed, December, 1929.

1929. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

"Know Your Movies"

By Welford Beaton

Mr. Welford Beaton has been a friend and critic of the motion picture this many a year. He is one of the few men left who still battle for the silent film. This book is an impassioned summation of his pleas to go back to speechless movies. It is the kind of book that continually tempts one to argument: one would like to sit down with its author and thrash out point after point of personal opinion—on which so many of its pronouncements lean—sure that whatever the outcome might be, one would at least have had a stimulating give and take with a man who is enthusiastic and sincere.

Reviewed, December, 1932.

1932. Howard Hill, Hollywood, Calif.

"Let's Go to the Movies"

By Iris Barry

"Let's Go to the Movies" by Iris Barry, who apparently finds time to write about motion pictures for no less than three London papers, deserves a generous critical hurrah! You will find yourself captivated by its unpretentious, lively manner, and then quickly intrigued by its solid grasp of what movies are all about. As a critic Miss Barry is of

the movie generation, approaching pictures with none of the prejudices of the theatrical tradition. She reveals an active mind in vivid contact with the motion picture both as an entertainment, an evolving art form, and a psychological mechanism which provides an unique outlet for the pressure of modern civilization upon the individual. This book is recommended to the general public as well as to review members and to better films groups which may care to read it and make it a subject for discussion.

Reviewed, June, 1927.

1927. Payson and Clarke, New York.

"Moving Pictures: How They are Made and Worked"

By Frederick A. Talbot

Frederick A. Talbot's "Moving Pictures" has as a secondary title, "How They Are Made and Worked," and might properly be amplified further by "The Romance and History of Their Inception and Development." This comprehensive volume presents 429 pages, entirely rewritten from its original text of a dozen years ago, and makes its appearance in the "Conquests of Science" series issued by the J. B. Lippincott Company. The educational and informative value of "Moving Pictures" can scarcely be estimated, and its perusal is recommended to all interested in film history or in any of the varied branches of the motion picture industry or art.

Reviewed, September, 1924.

1924. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

"Pictorial Beauty on the Screen"

By Victor O. Freeburg

"Pictorial Beauty on the Screen" by Victor O. Freeburg is, in the author's words, "the first book in which a systematic analysis of pictorial composition on the screen has been attempted. Discussions of plot, dramatic situations, characterization, etc., are omitted as irrelevant generally to the subject."

A perusal of this book can scarcely fail to make any motion picture more interesting and will appreciably heighten the enjoyment of those films where the prin-

ciples of pictorial composition are found to have been observed. It is a book for everyone who cares enough about motion pictures to want to understand them and get the greatest enjoyment from them and, by raising the level of public taste, to contribute to their advancement.

Reviewed, February, 1924.

1924. Macmillan Co., New York.

"The Story of the Films"

"The Story of the Films" is a book that has come into being largely through the efforts of Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy, president of F. B. O. Pictures Corp. He is a man of marked business ability with a background of culture and is peculiarly fitted to understand an enormous activity like the motion pictures which is part business and part art. He is responsible for the editing of what is essentially a compilation of lectures given by fourteen prominent figures in the motion picture industry before the Harvard Business School during the spring of 1927. Taken together these addresses fully substantiate the often repeated theory that the complete story of the rise and development of the motion picture industry is the grandest scenario of them all. This book is heartily recommended to all members of the National Board of Review and to all affiliated groups. It will answer a great many questions.

Reviewed, January, 1928.

1927. McGraw-Hill, New York.

"The Talkies"

By Arthur Edwin Krows

"The Talkies" by Arthur Edwin Krows fills a long felt want. In language that is not too technical it tells just how the talkies talk, explaining both the apparatus used and the principles of physics upon which that apparatus is constructed. In reviewing the problems and the possibilities of the talkies, Mr. Krows draws upon his rich experience on the stage and on the screen. He differentiates stage from screen art in a convincing manner and makes a plea for the emancipation of the screen through increasingly orig-

(Continued on page 10)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR

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Little Women

Adapted from Louisa May Alcott's book by Sarah V. H. Mason and Victor Herrman, directed by George Cukor, photographed by Henry Geriardi, settings by Hobe Erwin, produced and distributed by RKO-Radio.

The cast

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. March..... | Samuel Hinds |
| Mrs. March..... | Spring Byington |
| Meg..... | Frances Dee |
| Jo..... | Katharine Hepburn |
| Beth..... | Jean Parker |
| Amy..... | Joan Bennett |
| Aunt March..... | Edna May Oliver |
| Laurie..... | Douglass Montgomery |
| Mr. Lawrence..... | Henry Stephenson |
| Professor Bhaer..... | Paul Lukas |

Little Women on the screen has such strongly appealing qualities that the temptation is almost overwhelming simply to call it a lovely picture and pray for others just as lovely. It re-creates with remarkable tenderness a way of life that, merely to watch it on the film, offers a soothing escape from the anxieties and excitements that make today's living so hectic and uncertain. For innumerable people to whom the book is a cherished part of their memories it brings back, recognizable and vivid, something they thought gone forever.

If to put a book on the screen with all the effectiveness that sympathy and good taste and careful artifice can devise is to make a fine motion picture, then *Little Women* is a fine picture. Only faintly does the Hollywood temptation to gild the lily obtrude: something of the homely shabbiness of the March home is missing—the attic to which Jo fled with her griefs irresistibly

suggests a carefully stocked antique shop—Concord has rather more of opulent handsomeness that one expects of the home of Emerson and Thoreau and Bronson Alcott during the Civil War. But restraining this tendency toward richness is a sincere feeling for the life of that far-off time, and that feeling triumphs eloquently.

The story doesn't need retelling here. It is the simple tale, warm and human and innocent, of how four sisters grew up, with their good times and sad times. Inevitably, with the condensation needed for the screen, the sad times seem to predominate. Beth's illness and death, for instance, without the leisurely pace of the book to separate them, seems unduly drawn out and tearful. So much of Miss Alcott's cheerful robustness of humor has had to be left out that the picture has a "soft" quality absent from the book. But here again the director's restraint saves the day: with all the tears there is no mawkishness—it is all sincere and genuine.

The cast is almost wholly admirable. Of course Katharine Hepburn stands out—she has that gift of personality that makes stars, and it dominates the picture, just as the character of Jo dominates the book. But the other girls in their lesser parts are hardly less effective—Frances Dee and Jean Parker (looking so pleasantly unactressy!) and Joan Bennett, looking more Hollywood than anybody else but acting as she has never had a chance to act before. Most cheerily surprising of all, the two men are just right; Douglass Montgomery achieves that hither-

BULLETIN

1933

Exceptional
Berkeley Square
Cavalcade
Hell on Earth
Ivan
Little Women

M
Morgenrot
Poil de Carotte
The Private Life
of Henry VIII
Topaze
Zoo in Budapest

Honorable Mention
Der Hauptmann von
Koepenick
Hertha's Erwachen
Night Flight

to impossible triumph of being blond and boyish and well-bred without any faint touch of unvirility, and Paul Lukas (sans bushy beard, alas!) makes the German professor both manly and tenderly lovable. Spring Byington, the mother, is the only one who seems to have stepped out of an old-fashioned Sunday School book—she is unmistakably smug, and proud of it.

The picture should go into the archives of Americana because it preserves something precious in our tradition that can never come back again. Without being intended as an historical film it does really record, with surprising faithfulness, a period in America that many people think was most characteristically and ideally American. Here the simple sturdy virtues live as we like to think they lived in earlier times. Fortunately, for such as dislike "lessons," they are not underlined and labeled, but are intrinsic in a film that on the surface is above everything else entertaining, and appealing.—J. S. H.

Two New Stars

Only *Yesterday* may have little to do with the book from which it took nothing but the title, but there are several reasons why it is worth seeing. The principal one is Margaret Sullavan, who—as Katharine Hepburn did—takes the whole ladder up to stardom all in a single flight. There is perhaps a bit of significance in this, for these two girls—unlike as they are in many ways—both have a quality of distinction and breeding that is uncommon among young American screen actresses. Can it be that the style in heroines is shifting, and that the exotic, the seductive, the flaming youth types are making room for something that for lack of better words may be called well-bred and refined? At any rate Margaret Sullavan, with strength of personality strong enough to be impressive and acting ability to handle effectively the moods and emotions of a dramatic story, has also something in her blood and spirit that shows both in manner and in character—something that mere skill in acting could not put across.

Fortunately Miss Sullavan has been given

a part in her first film that gives her a chance to show what is in her. It is a very tearful story, with many mechanical situations and obvious weaknesses. But it has a certain vitality, and within its intentions gives a pretty truthful picture of certain aspects of yesterday.

Dorothea Wieck made her American reputation in the German film, *Mädchen in Uniform*. *Cradle Song* is her first Hollywood production, a film on which a great deal of pains has obviously been lavished. It is a simple story of convent life, and the central figure is a girl who tries to renounce the world and has a good many pangs before her renunciation is complete. The weakness of it is that it is too smoothly and handsomely done—like a face from which a beauty specialist has removed all the imperfections and lines of character. (Incidentally it has a Spanish setting with hardly an atom of Spanish character). This process has even extended to the star, who gives faintly the impression of having been put through a system of massage and eyebrow-plucking and general beauticianery. And the part she plays is not strong enough to triumph over these prettifications. But something of inner fire is still visible. It will be a pity if so gifted an actress is not given a better chance to show what is beneath the surface.—J. S. H.

(Continued from page 8)

inal productions. He also breaks a lance for the National Board's long upheld contention that pictures must be made in sufficient variety of artistic form and intellectual calibre to meet the demands of particular or selected audiences. "The Talkies" is highly recommended to all members of the National Board of Review and all its affiliated groups and motion picture study clubs which are trying to view and understand the motion picture as a social force in the community.

Reviewed, January, 1931.

1930. Henry Holt and Co., New York.

"What's Wrong with the Movies?"

By Tamar Lane

Mr. Tamar Lane has written a book about the movies that is refreshing in its

(Continued on page 15)

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

UNLAGGING interest has marked the 1933 activity of the Better Films Council of Memphis, Tenn. On the first of February the Council initiated the plan of a Saturday afternoon junior matinee in one of the suburban theatres. This was the follow-up interest of a very successful Thanksgiving matinee showing *Forbidden Adventure* with Mitzi Green. *Little Orphan Annie* was given at a later matinee, and an April matinee picture was *Mr. Robinson Crusoe* with Douglas Fairbanks. Lists of approved pictures, designated as to whether they are for adults only or for family audiences are posted in schools of the city.

The local groups represented in the Council are: American Association of University Women, Children's Department of the Cossitt Library, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Daughters of the American Revolution, City Federation of the Parent-Teacher Association, Jewish Women's Organizations, City Circle of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, various Women's Clubs, Memphis-Little Rock Film Board of Trade, Film Exchange Managers of Memphis, each theatre owner of Memphis, a representative from each private and parochial school of the city, and Girls' Scout Council. The committees assigned for conducting the Council work include Exhibitor Contact, Publicity, Program and Membership. The Council meetings are held four times a year with the annual election in March. Mrs. Lawrence Akers, the founder and first president, elected when the Council was formed late in 1931, was re-elected in March. This was certain recognition of the valuable leadership which she has given during this time.

An outstanding spring accomplishment was the sponsorship by the Council of the grand opera film, *Pagliacci*. Through their efforts in giving it wide publicity this showing proved most successful. Interest was given to another musical film a little later in the season when *Be Mine Tonight*, the British film, distributed in this country by

Universal, was run during National Music Week by the Council assisted by the civic, musical and literary clubs. Among other films receiving the Council's special attention were *The Mayor of Hell*, the James Cagney picture of a boys' reformatory, and *Trailing the Killer*, a humane animal picture.

The Council actively endorsed the Sunday movie bill which came before the legislature in the spring.

THE Better Films Committee of New Orleans, La., is unique in being a department of a state-wide organization, The Louisiana Cooperative Educational Association. The following quoted from the report of the Better Films Committee in the publication of this Association, The Louisiana Leader, shows the importance which is attached to this phase of the Association's work. The report was written by Mrs. A. S. Tucker, chairman of the New Orleans Committee who succeeds Mrs. J. M. White, organizer and first chairman, who interestedly serves as state Better Films Chairman of the Association. The Better Films Committee was given a page in The Leader of January, summing up the past work. It says:

"One of the most cultural and constructive activities of the Louisiana Cooperative Educational Association is that of its Better Films Committee. The work of this Committee covers a period of only eleven months. Organizing early in 1932, the active work was begun in February, by putting on a series of Junior Matinees, showing on Saturday morning pictures suitable to young people. These programs were supervised by a committee and chosen from selected lists of the National Board of Review, Child Welfare, Parents' Magazine, the Catholic Alumnae Association, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

"The objects of the work taken up by this committee are to study the motion pic-

ture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression; to support cultural films through special showings, and to sponsor the Junior Matinee and the Family Audience Picture.

"While this work looks back over a short period much has been accomplished. The Junior Matinees have been given at regular intervals bringing such pictures as Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Tom Sawyer* and Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. These programs were given in the late winter and spring at several of the neighboring theatres. The matinees were discontinued during the summer and taken up again in the fall.

"In September an open meeting was held. The public was invited and an interesting program was arranged, talks being made by leading citizens on the importance of better films especially for the young. Motion pictures of Louisiana were shown.

"The Committee is working toward the furtherance and use of visual education. This work has aroused a great deal of interest in New Orleans and throughout the State. Our leading citizens, theatre managers, and outstanding organizations are lending their fullest cooperation to the movement. Our work is now becoming less difficult of accomplishment as the theatre managers and exhibitors are recognizing the value of community cooperation in building good will for their theatres.

"In its far reaching work this committee also operates through the Parent-Teachers Association and Mothers Clubs to enlist teacher and parent interest and aid in bringing support to the selected pictures and in encouraging the production of more suitable pictures for boys and girls. Through the splendid interest of the Superintendent of the New Orleans Public Schools, the committee has been given permission to place on the bulletin boards in each school notices of selected endorsed pictures.

"The fine cooperation that this Committee has received has been extended also through the radio and the leading newspapers of the city. Every Friday, at four-thirty, an instructive and educational talk on Better Films is broadcast over Station WWL. This talk, possible through the courtesy of the WWL management, goes a long way to cre-

ate a better public understanding of the purposes of this movement. The committee has received favorable comment and announcements of coming programs through the local newspapers. The Item, The New Orleans States and The Times Picayune have given news space and interest in the furtherance of this work."

The year 1933 has seen a continuation of this active work of the past year and the introduction of new activity. One of the first new year activities was the following described by Mrs. Tucker, "The manager of the St. Charles Theatre asked us to preview three different programs. One included *Igloo* and *Men of America* run on the same program for one week. We sponsored this as good family fare. On Monday afternoon, the new program starts Saturday, the manager allowed us to extend invitations to the teachers and principals of the schools to be guests of the theatre from 4 to 6. The program was posted on the bulletin boards in all schools, and quite a lot of telephoning to P.-T. A. groups was done which resulted in an increased attendance of adults while 2,640 children saw the combined program. This, we feel, is work that gains confidence and respect for our organization—both with theatre managers and the general public."

"The organization is growing slowly but firmly and surely," writes Mrs. Tucker. "We had three Mothers' Clubs to join the Committee in March and were invited to visit several schools and present our work." A recent recognition has come to the Committee in the invitation to its chairman to serve as motion picture chairman in the First and Second District Federated Clubs of Louisiana and the New Orleans Council of P.-T. A.

The Committee has received an inquiry from a large local organization relative to bringing to New Orleans a series of exceptional films—possibly six. The pictures to be put on one a week for six weeks, or one a month, depending on the availability of those selected. The showings are to take place the latter part of this year or the early part of 1934. The pictures, the Committee states, have to be exceptional and ones that would not be brought to New Orleans by the local theatres. This request for a

program of exceptional photoplays shows the cooperative work the Committee is doing and its place as a real community asset. An example of activity with the unusual films was when the Committee assisted the manager of one of the local theatres in his showing of the outstanding German film *Mädchen in Uniform*.

In May Dr. Worth M. Tippy, Executive Secretary of the Department of Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of Churches, and interested in its better films program, visited New Orleans and carried greetings from the National Board of Review to the Better Films Committee. He met a number of the officers and talked to the group, returning with a very favorable report of their activity and enthusiasm. The Committee on the other hand wrote of their pleasure at meeting Dr. Tippy and of the enthusiasm they received from his visit.

THE Burlington (Vt.) Better Films Council at its annual meeting in May, elected as the new Council president, Mrs. Eugene F. Boyce, past chairman of the Program Committee; she succeeds Mrs. E. H. Reid who has been president since the Council's formation in 1931 and has given much of energy and interest to the work.

The meeting was held in the Athena Club House where a luncheon was served by the Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mrs. Reid, speaking of the Council's accomplishments said that at the time the Council was organized the fillers were poor but that now there has been some improvement; that there was poor attendance at worthwhile pictures but that the Council is working continually to remedy that condition by urging support of the better films; that there was no attention paid to the desirability for children of the Saturday pictures but that there has been considerable improvement in this. In telling of the work accomplished by the Photoplay Guide, Mrs. Reid gave as its object "Not to tell what to see but to give people a chance to choose." She spoke of the fact that the titles of pictures are often misleading, tending to keep audiences away from worthwhile films and noted instances that prove the Photoplay Guide is followed by

many both in Burlington and out of the city. In connection with the attempt to show children's pictures, it was stated that the whole program must be carefully selected and planned for in advance and that it is best to cooperate with the managers if possible.

For the past year the theme of the Council has been the "Educational Value of Pictures." In this connection the speaker at the January meeting was William Allen Newton of the Fleming Museum and an instructor of elementary science in the Burlington Junior High School, his subject was "Practical Visual Education." He showed the modern trend toward visual education, explaining the type of work he is doing and gave practical examples of the value of visual education in the schools. He gave the members suggestions as to the sources of educational films and colored slides that come with prepared lectures and are of use to clubs, schools and churches. At the close of Mr. Newton's talk the Council, in token of its interest and appreciation of his address, appointed a museum committee. The importance of visual education was again brought to the attention of the members of the Council at the March meeting through the courtesy of the superintendent of the local schools when several films of a non-theatrical nature were shown. The films were obtained by the Council from the General Electric film library at Schenectady, N. Y., and were for a week at the disposal of any principal or teacher who wished to use them in the classroom.

Committees to carry on the work with Mrs. Boyce and the other officers for the coming season are: Library Committee, Photoplay Guide Committee, and Children's Committee.

Mrs. Boyce writing of her new office says, "My own interest in the Council began as an outgrowth of my desire for my children to occasionally be able to see a worthwhile film. As chairman of the program committee, I found that my duties incurred quite an intensive study of the motion picture from several standpoints. The more I studied and read of their development the more my interest has grown. During the coming year I desire to concentrate upon visual education and Junior Matinees in our programs."

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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FRANCES C. BARRETT

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. *Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).*

Mature audience. *Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).*

Junior matinee. *Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.*

***—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.**

AS HUSBANDS GO—*Warner Baxter and Helen Vinson. Fox.* A pleasant and well-bred comedy about how an understanding husband dealt with an infatuation of his wife's. *Family.*

BEAUTIFUL—*Ann Harding. RKO-Radio.* The story of a woman surgeon carried away by romance and a charming young man. One of the star's best parts. *Family.*

BEFORE MORNING—*Leo Carrillo. Stage and Screen.* A mystery play that holds the interest—it involves an actress, a wife and a husband who dies under suspicious circumstances. *Mature.*

***COUNSELLOR-AT-LAW**—*John Barrymore. Universal.* An excellent picture dealing with a man who has risen from poverty to a position of power as a counsellor-at-law, admirably played by Mr. Barrymore. *Family.*

***CRADLE SONG**—*Dorothea Wieck. Paramount.* A picture well directed and excellently acted in which a woman gives up the world for convent life. *Family.*

DANCING LADY—*Joan Crawford, Clark Gable and Franchot Tone. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Another show about a show with the old plot sumptuously decorated—the dance numbers are among the most stunning yet produced, with Fred Astaire's dancing adding a great deal. *Family.*

DESIGN FOR LIVING—*Miriam Hopkins, Fredric March and Gary Cooper. Paramount.* An adaptation of the witty play by Noel Coward about "three people who were very fond of one another," a girl and two men she loved and who though rivals remained friends. *Mature.*

DUCK SOUP—*Four Marx Brothers. Paramount.* An amusing comedy laid in a mythical king-

dom, with very little singing and dancing but with plenty of foolish fun. *Family.*

FEMALE—*Ruth Chatterton. First National.* An amusing story of a remarkably successful business woman who does not have the same success in love. *Mature.*

FOG—*Mary Brian and Reginald Denny. Columbia.* A murder mystery aboard an ocean liner during a dense fog. *Family.*

FROM HEADQUARTERS—*George Brent. Warner.* With a rather ordinary murder mystery as its basis, this picture gives a very interesting, even fascinating exposition of the police machinery by which the murderer was detected. *Family.*

GUN JUSTICE—*Ken Maynard. Universal.* Western with plenty of good riding amid glorious scenery. *Junior matinee.*

***HER SWEETHEART**—*Marie Dressler and Lionel Barrymore. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* The surprising story of a long-buried romance—both humorous and touching with many shrewd sidelights on human nature. *Family.*

HORSEPLAY—*Slim Sumerville. Universal.* An amusing comedy about two cowboys who take their white horse and go to England to find the girl Slim loves. *Family.*

***IF I WERE FREE**—*Irene Dunne and Clive Brook. RKO-Radio.* The story of a man and woman married to the wrong people—done with excellent taste and skill, and the dialogue has intelligence and charm. *Mature.*

IN THE MONEY—*Skeets Gallagher and Lois Wilson. Invincible.* A pleasant story about a "broke" family, somewhat in the type of *Little Women* and *Three Cornered Moon*, with amusing situations and lines. *Family.*

THE INVISIBLE MAN—*Claude Rains. Universal.* A young scientist discovering invisibility is forced to become invisible before he has discovered the means of reappearance. Well done and quite convincing. *Mature.*

JIMMY AND SALLY—*James Dunn and Claire Trevor. Fox.* A pleasant comedy about a fresh young publicity man and his ups and downs in love and business. *Family.*

LADY KILLER—James Cagney. Warner. A young man joins a gang to make some easy money but decides to leave it and goes West to get a job in the movies. *Mature.*

LONE COWBOY—Jackie Cooper. Suggested by Will James' book. Paramount. A Western that is different—dwelling more on a young boy's ambition to be a cowboy than on the usual "shoot 'em up" idea. *Family. Junior matinee.*

*THE MAD AGE—Edited by Gilbert Seldes. Preferred. America's past fifteen years as culled from newsreels. The selection of scenes, the way they are put together and the comment on them is exceptionally intelligent—the result is not only entertaining but thought provoking. Suggested for schools, libraries and churches; worth being kept permanently available. *Family.*

THE MAN THEY COULDN'T ARREST—Hugh Wakefield. General. A British mystery play in which an inventor with ingenious radio devises helps Scotland Yard—interestingly shows the English system at work. *Family.*

A MAN'S CASTLE—Spencer Tracy and Loretta Young. Columbia. The story of a man's tough exterior softened by a girl's loyalty. Charm and sentiment galore, helped to seem real by excellent actors. *Mature.*

MASTER OF MEN—Jack Holt. Columbia. The rise of a steel worker to that of a magnate and the difference that power made in his life. *Family.*

MIDNIGHT—Sidney Fox and O. P. Heggie. Universal. An interesting character study of the effects of the electrocution of a woman on the foreman of the jury and his family. *Mature.*

MY LIPS BETRAY—Lilian Harvey. Fox. Pleasant little comedy romance taking place in a mythical kingdom where a beer-garden entertainer becomes famous overnight as a rumor spreads through the city that she is the king's favorite. *Family.*

OLSEN'S BIG NIGHT—El Brendel. Fox. A Swedish janitor helps defeat a plot against true love—one of the comedian's most amusing comedies. *Family.*

THE PRIZEFIGHTER AND THE LADY—Max Baer and Myrna Loy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The crisis that a swelled head brought into a prizefighter's married life. Plausible story of the ring and a fight whose realism is guaranteed by the participation of real fighters and good direction. *Mature.*

RAINBOW OVER BROADWAY—Joan Marsh and Frank Albertson. Chesterfield. A pleasant story of a pair of young song writers and an ex-actress who is their step-mother. There is plenty of tuneful music and an agreeable cast. *Family.*

SHOULD LADIES BEHAVE—Alice Brady and Lionel Barrymore. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A

delightful comedy of a rivalry between mother and daughter with considerable novelty of characterization and plot. The title, though it has a certain fitness, gives no indication of the amusing quality of the picture. *Mature.*

SITTING PRETTY—Jack Oakie, Jack Haley and Ginger Rogers. Paramount. A good musical show in which two song writers go to Hollywood to make their fortune. *Family.*

SON OF A SAILOR—Joe E. Brown. First National. The star is highly amusing in the part of a bragging sailor whose boastfulness gets him into some difficult situations. *Family. Junior matinee.*

TAMING OF THE JUNGLE—Monogram. An interesting picture dedicated to the wild animals of the world, showing how the jungle beasts are caught and trained for exhibition purposes. On the whole it shows that the animals are treated kindly—a good picture for all animal lovers. *Family. Junior matinee.*

THE THRONE OF THE GODS—First Division. A pictorial record of the International Himalayan Expedition's attempt to scale one of the world's highest mountains. Lowell Thomas provides characteristic comment. *Family.*

THUNDERING HERD—Randolph Scott. Paramount. Good Western showing the Indians and white men hunting buffalo. Pictorially beautiful and interesting. *Family.*

*THE WORLD CHANGES—Paul Muni. First National. The rise of a Dakota farm lad to a Chicago millionaire meat packer, with all the changes and woes that money and power brought to the family. A bigness of theme and fine acting. *Family.*

(Continued from page 10)

frankness and sincerity. The author is evidently a man of wide experience in the motion picture industry and is thoroughly conversant with its history and development. He writes in a journalese and often slangy manner but everything he says has the tang of truth and of personal conviction. His book clears the air and sends one to the screen with a new insight.

In trying to answer his own question, "What's wrong with the movies?" Mr. Lane distributes the blame with a rather bewildering impartiality among the producers, directors, exhibitors, and the public. This book would be excellent for discussion at club meetings and should certainly be included in any course of reading on motion pictures.

1923. The Waverly Co., Inc., Los Angeles.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
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National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
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To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

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Vol. IX, No. 1

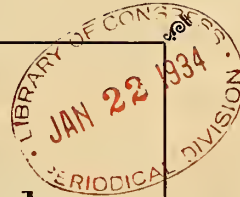


January, 1934

A New
Administrative Member

An Experiment
with the Motion Picture

Best Films of 1933



*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*ALICE IN WONDERLAND—Charlotte Henry and All Star cast. Paramount. "Alice in Wonderland" and "Alice Through the Looking Glass" are combined into one dream story, beautifully done and retaining the fantasy of the books. The whole cast is excellent and Charlotte Henry makes an appealing Alice. Suggested for libraries. Family. Junior matinee.

BOMBAY MAIL—Edmund Lowe. Universal. A murder mystery which takes place and is solved on the Bombay mail train. Family.

BROKEN DREAMS—Randolph Scott and Martha Sleeper. Monogram. How a little boy won his stepmother's love—simple but with many interesting incidents and human touches. Family.

BY CANDLELIGHT—Paul Lukas and Elissa Landi. Universal. A highly sophisticated and amusing story of the love intrigue between a butler and a lady's maid—both pretending to be something they are not. Mature.

THE CHARMING DECEIVER—Constance Cummings. Majestic. A London mannequin goes to Deauville and pretends to be a famous movie star with complications resulting when she meets a young man whose identity is also a mystery. English production. Family.

CONVENTION CITY—Joan Blondell, Adolphe Menjou and Dick Powell. First National. A most amusing satire on big business conventions—an outing for the hen-pecked salesman, a paradise for the gold-diggers. Plenty of pep—slightly vulgar in places. Mature.

CROSS COUNTRY CRUISE—Lew Ayres, and June Knight. Universal. Adventures on a

cross country bus from New York to California. Plenty of comedy relief. Family.

EIGHT GIRLS IN A BOAT—Dorothy Wilson and Douglass Montgomery. Paramount. A worthwhile picture well-directed and excellently acted. A sensitive and loving girl is left by her wealthy father in a private school where life becomes very complicated for her. Mature.

*ESKIMO—Native cast. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Beautiful love story with the frozen North as a background. Both interesting and instructional showing the life and customs of the Eskimo. Family.

*FLYING DOWN TO RIO—Dolores Del Rio, Fred Astaire, Gene Raymond and Ginger Rogers. RKO Radio. A lavish and lively romance with music, in which Fred Astaire proves his right to bigger and better parts. Tuneful and colorful with plenty of comedy. Family.

GALLANT LADY—Ann Harding and Clive Brook. United Artists. A mother-love story in which Ann Harding schemes to get back the child she has allowed to be adopted in his infancy. Mature.

GIRL WITHOUT A ROOM—Charles Farrell, Marguerite Churchill and Charles Ruggles. Paramount. A bright and amusing comedy with music in which a young Tennessee boy goes to Paris to study art. Charles Ruggles is his usual funny self. Family.

*GOING HOLLYWOOD—Bing Crosby and Marion Davies. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The romance of a girl in love with a crooner, handsomely produced with several tuneful songs, chances for Marion Davies to exhibit all her talents, diversified by the comedy of Ned Sparkes and Stuart Erwin, and a hilarious interlude by the Radio Trio. Family.

HIS DOUBLE LIFE—Roland Young and Lilian Gish. From the novel "Buried Alive" by Arnold Bennett. Paramount. An amusing comedy of mistaken identity—a timid artist finds happiness in the quiet of the country while all England mourns him as dead. Family.

THE HOUSE ON 56th STREET—Kay Francis. Warner. Melodrama that carries a woman from show-girl in 1905 to gambler in the late twenties when she rescues her daughter from also becoming a gambler. Pretty mixed in motives and values but the mother-love element has its appeal. Mature.

I WAS A SPY—Conrad Veidt and Madeleine Carroll. Fox. A British-made war picture of spies in Belgium. A nurse who managed to keep from getting caught for a surprisingly long time is the central figure. Anti-German in its effect. Mature.

(Continued on page 14)

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A New Administrative Member

THE Executive Committee announces the election of Mrs. Marguerite E. Schwarzman to that body. Mrs. Schwarzman has served as a member of the Better Films National Council and has taken an active part in the Board's affairs. Her work and viewpoint which have brought her an interest in motion pictures, are best given in her words as follows:

"I remember arriving late at one of those chatty, though highly instructive, parents' meetings of that particular progressive school to which I am devoted (it is helping to shape my children's lives). Someone was asking whether a real New Yorker could be found in the suburbs of that city. 'I mean someone, you know, who was born and bred in New York.' I qualified.

"If I am a person of many interests—of which I have sometimes been accused—I am inclined to attribute this failing to my persistent loyalty to that diverse metropolis. True, I have occasionally wandered

off for fairly long periods at a time and if, as they say, New Yorkers are frightfully provincial, my travels may be credited with giving me some perspective and a wider understanding. Possibly Swiss parentage had something to do with this. Be that as it

may, I have tried to shape the varied and stimulating influence of the large city about a central theme — giving the coming generation a balanced and objective aspect of life.

"With a research background gotten largely at the American Museum of Natural History long, long ago, I founded the Children's Laboratories in New Rochelle, N. Y. This was an experiment to bring science concepts within the reach of the young child. It succeeded so well that soon I was carrying

my exhibits about to 6,000 playground children in Westchester County in the summer and, in the winter, I was teaching in the elementary schools of Pelham and Scarsdale and lecturing to mothers' groups. About this time I was asked to teach science



Mrs. Marguerite E. Schwarzman

for teachers in the Extension Division of New York University.

"It was a busy life but while on the staff of the Westchester County Recreation Commission, I helped organize junior motion picture performances in a number of communities. Since my earliest professional beginnings I saw the educational possibilities of the motion picture. My first outlay for the Children's Laboratories was for a projector and science films. I am still stressing the need for vitalized visual aids in education and at present, I am deeply involved in supervising unemployed workers at Teachers College on a research project to

develop and evaluate certain graphic methods and materials for the educator.

"As variants of the central theme—a balanced and objective aspect of life for the coming generation—there are such duties as are required of a member of the New Rochelle Woman's Club, a committee member of the Westchester County Probation Association and the president of the newly-organized Barnard College group in Westchester County.

"I welcome the opportunity for broader visions offered by my membership on the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review."

An Experiment with the Motion Picture

By MISS JOSEPHINE MATTHEWS

Instructor, Junior High School, Great Neck, Long Island, N. Y.

IT is perhaps safe to say that no generation has ever been deluged with so enormous a field of visual expression. The multitudinous processes of nature, the innumerable activities of humanity are flashed daily and nightly upon screens in theatres, churches, club-rooms and private homes. Lecturers, teachers, ministers scarcely dare venture on the platform without at least a stereopticon. The ease with which a heterogeneous hodge-podge of knowledge is broadcast becomes truly alarming and a direct challenge to educators who realize that pictures merit a permanent place in our educational system. It becomes a pressing necessity to establish definite standards for the selection of pictures and for their place in the school curriculum.

With such viewpoints in mind, Professor Henry Johnson's Movietone History Series was selected for trial in the Junior High School of Great Neck, New York. In these pictures the story of our American songs is shown. In each case the first part of the film shows Professor Johnson of Columbia University as he tells the story of the writing of the song. This introductory lecture is followed by historically accurate dramatizations of the important scenes in the history of the songs. The reels used

were *America*, *Dixie*, *Yankee Doodle* and *Columbia the Gem of the Ocean*. In addition to this a two reel picture entitled *Hats Off* was shown. This film depicts Uncle Sam explaining to school children the story of the flag and the reason why all citizens should show it respect. The film *Hats Off* however was not scheduled for use in the final testing or rating as given in this article.

The demonstration came at the end of a unit of work in which history and music were incidentally correlated with the idea of illuminating the subject matter. This correlated work covered a period of some six weeks. Experimental groups and control groups of 20 pupils respectively were formed. The experimental group was carefully instructed through a conscious correlation of both music and history. The control group received both music and history instruction but with no emphasis and no particular stress on any correlation.

A set of 25 test questions was prepared finally, consisting of ten multiple choice and fifteen true and false. The tests were given to both groups before and after seeing and hearing the film.

The control group produced an initial score of 240 points out of a total of 500 or

a 48% record before attending the demonstration but scored 378 points after seeing the picture, thereby gaining 138 points—an average of 5.5 points per pupil—through having attended this thirty minute picture lesson, and showing a 75.6% record on the score card.

The experimental group showed an initial score of 397 points at a 79.4% record and a final score of 471 netting a total gain of 64 points with an average gain of 2.5 points per pupil and lacking just 29 points of making the perfect score of 500 points, the final score card rating 94%. Some significance should be given to the difference in median I. Q.s of the two groups, the control group rating 14 points below that of the experimental group.

The fact that the kind of test given could cover only a limited field of facts was taken into consideration and some indications of concomitant values derived from the pictures were assembled and charted. On the theory that concomitant values could only be tested by definitely observing their development over a period of time, eight children—four boys and four girls—were selected for this part of the experiment. Twelve weeks of opportunity were given for developments.

It should be stated that concomitant value as here referred to indicates such learnings as developed or grew out of the project—involving more nearly the development of the "whole child." It will be noted that the particular results chosen for observation were somewhat irrelevant, oddly assorted and far removed from the original source. But it is the writer's belief that such native learnings call for selective thinking, for power of sustained effort toward remote goals and for insight into life situations approximating at least purposeful education.

Tentative psychographs were made of each student in an attempt to produce a picture of personality less analytical than a mere I. Q. Special note was then made of how each individual child responded to the movietone pictures. Within a very short time all had revealed their reactions through informal talks outside of school hours. From these talks the instructors isolated in so far as possible a single tendency or topic for each pupil in the experiment. In all

cases—but one, the psychographic ratings ran consistently with the apparent interests or tendencies revealed by the children during the twelve weeks of observation.

Two girls, ardent movie fans, with adolescent aspirations of becoming Broadway stars were greatly impressed by the idea of movies entering the teaching profession. A lively curiosity prompted these girls to replace movie magazines with teachers' college catalogs salvaged from all parts of the country. Under the instructors' guidance these were carefully studied, compared and discussed. A study of the history of public schools together with biographies of leading figures in education followed. From out of the whole maze of material collected and assimilated, each girl produced a work entitled "My Career." Among other things it contained the history of the girl's chosen college, a history of education, a complete high school and college curriculum, a budget, programs of extra curricular activities and plans for scholarships. Both girls requested to do "practice teaching" with retarded children after school hours.

Of the remaining six children three seemed to reveal reactions and thinkings along similar lines. That is, two boys and one girl noticed that the Johnson songs were written at moments of great stress in the life of the country. They were curious to know what songs modern nations were producing during moments of crisis. Russia was chosen as a type study. Each child chose a special phase of the work and then organized study groups composed of children not in the experiment. This topic became the center of controversy for the semester. Debates, dramatizations, illustrations brought out the history of Russia, the revolution, the Soviet government and Russian cultural life with special emphasis on Russian music. These children carried the work much more directly into the school room and did much more of it during school hours than the other children in the experiment.

One boy and one girl made a study of American cultural life during the Revolutionary period. The boy dropped out partly by reason of illness and partly because of a lack of stability for carrying a project to a definite goal over a period of time.

This was consistent with his psychographic rating. The girl completed the story and gave a series of impersonations to the class as her contribution.

The remaining boy was chosen because of his peculiar psychographic rating which seemed at odds with an I. Q. of 148. His school history showed him to be a problem child—marks average, a general tendency toward being sullen, somewhat indolent and resentful. The instructor found him most reluctant about revealing his real thinking and gave up the idea of reaching him during school hours. He disliked school but found the collection of curios and relics displayed about the room fascinating and came evening after evening to play. With a World War helmet on his head and a rusty Revolutionary musket on his shoulder he was on his own grounds, feeling content and at ease to express himself freely. The Johnson pictures puzzled him. He liked the song pictures but did not approve of the film *Hats Off* stating that the professor was emphasizing a war spirit and not patriotism. This seemed a bit inconsistent since the boy was so fond of playing soldier but he explained that "make believe" and "real" were very different and offered to prove his point if the instructor would promise not to reveal his work to the class. After two weeks of mysterious waiting the boy appeared one evening with a ponderous book he had made and entitled "My Philippics." Enhanced with a pick and shovel design on the cover, dedicated to "a great cause," and addressed to the Professor it assailed rather consistently the futility of war, the interpretation of patriotism and "rageteering." The instructor found the "Philippics" not above criticism by any means but they did show fundamentally sound adult thinking. When challenged as to his ideas on war and patriotism the boy brought in, to prove his arguments, a series of printed war photographs taken at close range on the World War battlefields. The gruesome, silent evidence could not be disputed. The boy recognized the distress of the instructor, closed the book promptly and was out of the room in a minute.

As the instructor was about to board a commuters' train a half hour later, the boy

arrived breathlessly. In a tin box he carried his pet lizard and this he offered as an expression of regret explaining—again consistently—that nurses worked on battlefields and he had not thought of the pictures as being trying. Interest immediately, however, centered on the lizard which was highly prized by the boy. After much debating it was decided best to return the lizard to his lair, the boy agreeing to allow the instructor to mention his "Philippics" as a favor in place of giving her the lizard. Meanwhile the commuters' train not being concerned with boys and lizards was on its way to the city whereupon the instructor and the pupil joyfully carried the lizard back to his fellows in a window pit by the cellar door.

MODERN screen audiences are far more critical of their entertainment than any stage audience ever was and for this reason—motion picture actors and actresses have to "watch their step" to a greater extent than they did in the theatre, according to Fredric March, Paramount star, who has played for years in both mediums. March declares that the average film fan in America's hinterland has a far more observant eye and detects flaws and incongruities more quickly than his sophisticated Broadway countryman.

"The reason seems to lie," he says, "in the fact that motion pictures are essentially intimate. The ability of the camera to pry into life with its all-revealing close-ups, which unmask every facial expression, has made its public unusually discriminating. The stage audience is forced to depend more or less on suggestion. If we depict a waterfall on the stage, we do it by means of an offstage sound of running water and a reference in the dialogue to the waterfall's proximity. Picture-goers, however, won't stand for this deception. If the action or background of the story calls for a waterfall, they want to see and hear it. The same applies to other objects which are shown every day on the screen but which can only be suggested on the stage. Thus it is that the films have constantly set new standards of entertainment. On the other

(Continued on page 10)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional and Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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1933

IN a year when a group of intelligent and critical people can agree on barely five motion pictures that stand out in their memories as in any way exceptional, the other five needed to fill out a list of "ten best" are likely to be picked with more reference to taste than to critical standards. So at least half of this list for 1933 represent preferences rather than convictions: among several pretty good films, one as good as another and none of them notable, personal preference is about the only thing to follow. And *de gustibus* one might dispute indefinitely.

It has been a year with many pictures that were good entertainment, and none, in America, that brought anything perceptibly new to the cinematic art. Probably the most noteworthy thing has been the spread and the universal appeal of the Walt Disney Silly Symphonies in color. *Three Little Pigs* has met with unprecedented popularity

—one has to go back to the early Chaplin to find anything like it. To make a list of the year's best pictures without including one of these cartoons would ignore the most individual and effective creation the screen has offered. *The Pied Piper* goes into our list because, in a quieter way than the other Symphonies, it does something harder to do, and does it just as well. Nearly all of the Silly Symphonies reach a height of fancy and sometimes of poetic imagination in the sound motion picture that the longer films seldom touch.

Few of the better films of the year are direct creations for the screen. Most of them are derived from books or plays. *Topaze*, considered by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays the best American film of the year, came from a French play. Its great virtue is that when it reached the screen it brought no aroma of the theatre with it but created and sustained a high spirit of comedy through sheer pictorial qualities. The dialogue, while always helpful, was always secondary: one might not

Year's Best Films Chosen by National Board Committee on Exceptional Photoplays

AMERICAN

Berkeley Square
Cavalcade
Little Women
Mama Loves Papa
The Pied Piper (cartoon)
She Done Him Wrong
State Fair
Three Cornered Moon
Topaze
Zoo in Budapest

FOREIGN

Hertha's Erwachen (Hertha's Awakening)
Ivan
M
Morgenrot (Dawn)
Nicmandsland (Hell on Earth)
Poil de Carotte (Red Head)
The Private Life of Henry VIII
Quatorze Juillet (July 14th)
Rome Express
Le Sang d'un Poete (The Blood of a Poet)



John
Barrymore
in
"Topaze,"
chosen by
the Committee
on Exceptional
Photoplays
as the best
American
film of 1933

have understood a word that was spoken and yet missed nothing of the essentials of a delightful satire on some pretty fundamental human instincts. The director, the actors and the maker of the settings worked together with rare harmony.

Berkeley Square, *Cavalcade* and *Little Women* are also translations from other mediums, all of them curiously effective in evoking times gone by, either definitely, as in *Berkeley Square* and *Cavalcade*, or implicitly as in *Little Women*, contrasting those times with today. *Berkeley Square's* greatest appeal, however, is as a love story, and it manages to put over idealized romance as it is seldom done either on the screen or on the stage. *Cavalcade* is Noel Coward's elegy for the past glories of the British Empire, much of it stirring and poignant. *Little Women* is Louisa May Alcott brought to cinematic life with astonishing fidelity. Its

enormous success is undoubtedly the forerunner of numberless imitations—just as Mae West's imitators are legion. But time will probably show that genuine *Little Women's* are as rare as genuine Mae Wests.

Mama Loves Papa was obviously contrived for the special talents of Mary Boland and Charles Ruggles—talents precious enough to inspire a really great American comedy. This particular effort doesn't pretend to greatness, but it does definitely belong among the kindlier examples of the Babbitt species, a funny and often touching page from Suburbia.

She Done Him Wrong is something lustier, the overtly and successfully predatory female against a colorful Bowery background. It is as frank as an old Police Gazette, and much livelier and more picturesque. It is an odd companion to be bracketed with *Little Women* and *State*

Fair and *Mama Loves Papa*, but it belongs with them as a faithful bit of Americana. Incidentally the overpowering Mae West personality shouldn't hide the fact that Lowell Sherman's direction figured pretty largely in the picture's effectiveness.

State Fair, somewhat dry-cleaned for the sake of Janet Gaynor fans, still retains an authentic flavor of the mid-west soil, and a rich part for Will Rogers against a vivid background of rural and small-town life. Fortunately Blue Boy had no fans whose sensibilities had to be considered. *Three Cornered Moon* was a most undepressing picture of the depression, timely and in its insouciant way highly characteristic of an American attitude.

Zoo in Budapest brings the alphabetical list to a close, a lovely idyl of eager and unspoiled youth, photographed with unusual beauty.

Several other films might easily contend for a place on the list. *Bombshell* is probably the frankest and truest picture of motion picture life in Hollywood that has come along, just as *The Prizefighter and the Lady* is undoubtedly the best picture that has been made of a prize-fight. *Lady for a Day* is a most engaging version of the Cinderella tale, and *King Kong* a startling combination of antediluvian and modern. *The Invisible Man* did with remarkable success something only the screen can do. *The Mayor of Hell* and *Wild Boys of the Road* made worthy stabs at serious subjects, but good intentions exceeded skill—the stabs were only superficial where they should have been penetrating and deep. *Night Flight* had a big theme, and often a bigness in execution. *Turn Back the Clock* played effectively with a modern American version of the *Berkeley Square* idea, living one's life over again in the light of that life's after-knowledge. *Duck Soup*, probably not the best of the Marx Brothers *opera*, is yet a unique addition to the season's gaiety. Nothing containing Groucho Marx and his insane brand of sanity can be forgotten in looking over a year's humorous output.

Musical pictures have taken on life again, and though they have a fatal tendency to pivot around the old plot of *The Broadway Melody* they have brought the screening of musical numbers to fine perfection of rhyth-

mic motion. *Footlight Parade*, *Forty-second Street*, *Goldiggers of 1933*, *Moonlight and Pretzels*, *Flying Down to Rio*, and parts of *Dancing Lady* and *Going Hollywood*, put the song and dance of the screen on a new level of excellence.

The Mad Age, in a class by itself, is a picture of America's past fifteen years, culled with much skill and discrimination from newsreels, some of them new to the public. It belongs in any permanent collection of American films.

Foreign films have been fewer than usual this year, but there can be little argument about what have been the best of them. The two most unusual ones, each an extraordinary and often bewildering expression of individuality in cinematic terms, have been Dovshenko's *Ivan* and Jean Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poete*. Germany has sent us the powerful and engrossing *Niemandslund*, called *Hell on Earth* here, the tender and poignantly honest *Hertha's Erwachen*, the vivid and compelling picture of submarine warfare, *Morgenrot*, and *M*, that masterly creation of Fritz Lang's that must stand high among the sound films of all the years. From France, in addition to the Cocteau film, is that touching picture of unhappy child life, *Poils de Carotte*, and Rene Clair's gay and delightful *Quatorze Juillet*. From England, more like our own films, come *The Private Life of Henry VIII* with its lightly sketched amorous comedy and that excellent melodrama, *Rome Express*.

Perhaps many performances of actors and actresses will be remembered after the films in which they appeared are forgotten. Two stars have risen in a blaze of box-office gold—Katharine Hepburn and Mae West. Katharine Hepburn probably made her deepest impression in *Morning Glory*, though innumerable more people will see her in *Little Women*. Mae West obviously supplies a raciness that has been missing from the screen, and it is not impossible that she is creating a standard in female figures as well. Mary Boland, always amusing in her acidy portrayal of scatter-brained femininity, did something that went pretty deep in that scene in *Mama Loves Papa* where she said good-night to her fellow-guests at the house party. Jean Harlow, escaping from the mistakes that cast

her so unfortunately as a siren, showed in *Dinner at Eight* and *Bombshell* that she is really an individual and exceptional comedienne. Margaret Sullavan, appearing in only one film, immediately became a star, with a definite quality of well-bred charm that shows up a good deal of paste in some of cinema's jewels.

The only new man star of any calibre is Paul Robeson, with his superb performance of Emperor Jones. The Barrymores go on, Lionel becoming more and more Lionel, which fits admirably into things like *Stranger's Return*, and John, much more variable, ranging from the warm eccentricity of *Topaze* to the surprisingly effective tour de force of *Counsellor-at-Law*. James Cagney showed his versatility in *Footlight Parade*, but it was in *The Mayor of Hell* that he did the most impressive acting he has yet had a chance at. Frankie Darro, in the same picture, would have put anyone but Cagney in the shade. Young Douglas Fairbanks grows in depth and finish, Spencer Tracy always manages to make a part seem better than it is, Robert Montgomery gives one of the most moving moments to *Night Flight*, and Leslie Howard—especially in *Berkeley Square*—makes one wish some screen version of Hamlet could be found for him.

And Mickey Mouse continues to rival them all.—J. S. H.

PAUL Muni, who was the star of the Warner film *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, chosen by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays as the best American film for the year 1932, has established the "Paul Muni Award" for cinema excellence in the College of Cinematography at the University of Southern California. The award goes to the student showing the greatest proficiency in motion picture study.

(Continued from page 6)

hand, film-goers take their critical duties more seriously than stage audiences. They shop not only for their own entertainment, but act as arbiters for their entire neighborhood. If a picture has a false note, it is not long before everyone knows about it."

Through the Centuries

THE life of Christ has been brought to the screen many times since the first crude attempts of the early movie makers to use the new, universal medium for depicting the spirit of Christianity, but *Through the Centuries* is the best production yet made on that theme. Into a vivid picture of the pagan world under the Caesars is projected the life of the Son of Man, with all the pictorial power the modern motion picture has achieved, and to that stirring and dramatic narrative is added a forceful record of the spread of Christ's teachings through the world in the nineteen hundred years since the Crucifixion. Newsreels, travel pictures and dramatic films have been diligently searched to get the best material for showing not only the beginnings of Christianity but the heroic spirit of missionaries struggling against the devastations of ignorance, human fury and disasters of nature all over the world. The film was made under Catholic auspices, but its appeal—not only instructional but as entertainment of a vigorously interesting kind—is not confined to any one creed.

COLUMBIA University, University Extension, Department of English and Comparative Literature, announces an evening course in Photoplay Composition from February 12 to May 21, 1934. Instructor, Mrs. Frances Taylor Patterson. This is a practical course in the preparation and presentation of screen material. It covers the writing of the scenario and the studio procedure through which the story passes in the process of being filmed. Plot structure, methods of gaining and holding attention, character delineation, setting, continuity writing, the development of dramatic dialogue for sound recording, the principles of comedy, motion picture reviewing, writing synopses, story types, staff position, editorial work and kindred topics are adequately treated. Mrs. Patterson is a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board and the author of several important books on photoplay composition.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Our Tenth Annual Conference

THE National Board of Review of Motion Pictures will hold its Tenth Annual Conference on February 8th, 9th and 10th at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. This occasion as well as marking a decade of conference get-togethers also marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the National Board of Review, which was organized in 1909. The Conference will survey the Board's history and activities, commemorating a quarter century of organized community activity for better films, and will also bring before its delegates recent developments and interests in the motion picture field in which the Board has had an active part. The Conference subject will be "Times and the Films."

There will be interesting picture review sessions, sessions given to addresses by outstanding personalities representing many interests related to motion pictures and evening sessions offering unusual cinema entertainment. On February 9th will be held the 19th Annual Luncheon in which notable speakers and screen celebrities will take part.

All members, correspondents and friends of the National Board are cordially invited to attend.

TO be Chairman of Motion Pictures of the County Federation of Women's Clubs, Chairman at Large of the local Women's Club, and local Parent-Teacher Association Motion Picture Chairman proves quite an interest in better films activity and this is true in the case of Mrs. Mina Church Brann who holds these offices in Montgomery County and Bethesda, Md.

Mrs. Brann urges her groups to activity by continually offering help and suggestion,

a sample of this is the following taken from the report given at one County meeting:

"Public opinion can change anything. This Federation and its contacts has an immense responsibility. Will the chairman of motion pictures or education of each club please send copies of the article (see below for copy) given you to the president of each civic group in the community—church, school, P.-T. A., etc., and ask a representative from each to meet with the local exhibitor or manager for the purpose of co-operating with him in booking suitable shows for the week-end. Urge all parents to attend the theatre with their young folks—make it a family jollification. Urge them not to leave their children there and go elsewhere unless they know the program. This week-end program with a little patience and cooperation can be made the most interesting and attractive program of the entire week, but you will have to help the manager build for this. Ask the managers to eliminate for these week-end shows all unsuitable trailers.

"A great many of you have spoken about the length of Saturday Matinee Programs, will you answer these questions:

"What kind of a program do you prefer for yourself and your family? Double feature shows or do you feel that the program is already too long?

"Does a balanced program suit you best? Feature, newsreel, comedy?

"An addressed, stamped envelope will bring to you a list of current magazines printing reviews of motion pictures rated as to age and interests. Also many other sources where you can get reliable information on this most important matter.

"A great deal of information concerning motion pictures is waiting for you at The Newcomb Public Library, Bethesda, Md."

The article referred to above was as follows:

I AM THE MOTION PICTURE

By ARTHUR JAMES

I am the child of man's genius, the triumph of man over space and time. I once was mute but now I have found my voice, I am eloquent to millions, I travel desert sands, I climb the tallest mountain peaks, I traverse prairie, glacier, jungle, forest, sea and air and bring the vision of my journeys to the eyes of common man.

I am the pleasant hour of prince and child, of master mind and little boy. I instruct, I delight, I thrill, I entertain, I shock, I cheer, I move the world to laughter and to tears.

I am the sublime story-teller of all ages. I am eloquent to millions, I travel desert

I have more friends than all the friendly men of earth. I stir the blood, I quicken the pulses, I encourage the imagination, I stimulate the young, I comfort and I solace the old and the sorrowing, I bring priceless gifts and make them yours.

I show more of travel than all the books penned by all writers of the world. I preach sermons to congregations greater than the combined flocks of the pulpits of all lands, I make for happiness, I make for kindness, I am the one great international friend.

I am history, written for the generations to come that every race and sect and creed can understand. I preserve heroes for posterity. I give centuries more of life to the arts and sciences. I am man's greatest and noblest invention.

I am the Motion Picture.

THE alert publicity chairman of the Staten Island (N. Y.) Better Film Council, Mrs. William C. Orton, decided to find out just what value the exhibitors of the community attached to the Council activity, particularly the Motion Picture Guide, and so wrote letters of inquiry to them. Excerpts from the responses quoted below show an answer decidedly in the positive:

"I have nothing but praise for your excellent pamphlet."

"I find the publicity of the Staten Island Better Film Council helpful in every respect. When our better pictures are shown, we always find an increased attendance at each performance. Regarding suggestions for better cooperation, at the present I do not have any, as up to now. I think you and your able assistants have covered every angle very creditably."

"Now that the Staten Island Better Film Council has been in operation over a year I agree with you that it is time we tried to see a perspective of what its activities have meant to the local theatres. Your guide has been a genuine service in giving the people an impartial criticism of pictures. I believe that its circulation should be frequently checked and that periodically some officer of local clubs should devote a portion of the meeting time to reminding members of the service." (Mrs. Orton assures us this is done).

"I would like to express my appreciation for your splendid work this past year and I sincerely believe that it has helped the various theatres and also the patrons as they were able to see the pictures they wanted to see and at the same time send their children to theatres showing pictures suitable for them."

"I received your letter of yesterday's date and in reply want to say that I was very much pleased to hear from you. In reference to an increased attendance at our better pictures I must say: 'Yes,' also the same answer regarding children at family pictures. Your criticisms on pictures have been very interesting and I enjoy receiving your reports."

"Answering your favor of the 11th, I do not hold the slightest doubt, that if times were normal, our mutual effort would meet with 100% better results. As regards the publicity of your Council, we have experienced a slight improvement, and this is also the case with the better picture department. The increase in children attendance at the family pictures is greatly handicapped by the fact that parents refrain from advising the children to see this kind of picture in preference to others. As regards further cooperation, the only course I can see at this time, is a very strong endeavor to have

the parents advise the children, as to the merits of the really good family pictures, as during the coming season we expect to have a great many of this kind. I assure you that our efforts are identical with your own, to make the theatre a better and more enjoyable place in which to find relaxation for the whole family."

THE Motion Picture Committee of the Patrons' League of Newport News, Va., began its third year of work in the fall of 1933. "The Committee," writes Mrs. P. F. Halsey, the very active chairman, "has grown to include the schools of the neighboring towns and counties. So far, the work has consisted of a monthly meeting with representatives from each school for the study of pictures and planning of Committee work; a report or talk on the subject at each individual Patrons' League monthly meeting; and a movie guide for children, based on the National Board of Review Magazine and Weekly Guide, published four times a week in the local papers and posted every two weeks in the schools, libraries and other public buildings. All possible propaganda is used to persuade mothers to look for and follow this guide. We have secured editorials on the work in our local papers, and have caused the discontinuance of a 'Kiddie Club' that was showing pictures not suitable for children. Several movie theatres are putting on a children's program on Saturday mornings, showing mostly Western pictures, which seems to be the best we can do, as they say there are not a sufficient number of children's pictures available for 52 programs a year."

THE chairman of the Better Films Committee of Ithaca, New York, Mrs. E. A. Denton, writes to us that their Committee works very happily with the managers who are most friendly and who co-operate with the Committee in all that it is trying to do.

The Committee does not censor, it recommends or keeps silent. Lists of pictures to be shown in Ithaca theatres are sent by the managers to the committees which classify them and make public the recommendations. Special attention is given to pictures suitable for children.

The Council of Parents and Teachers has expressed appreciation of the work done by Mrs. Denton and the Committee.

DURING the last few years the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City has produced a number of motion picture films dealing with various phases and periods of art, and from time to time new pictures are added.

The films available from the Museum are: *The Temples and Tombs of Ancient Egypt*, 2 reels; *The Daily Life of the Egyptians—Ancient and Modern*, 2 reels; *Digging into the Past—Egyptian Expedition*, 2 reels; *A Visit to the Armor Galleries*, 2 reels; *Firearms of Our Forefathers*, 1 reel; *The Hidden Talisman*, scenes laid in The Cloisters, the mediaeval museum on Fort Washington Heights, New York City, 1 reel; *The Gorgon's Head*, the story of Perseus, 2 reels; *The Spectre*, a Colonial fantasy with backgrounds of the major scenes rooms in the American Wing of the Museum, 1 reel; *The Pottery Maker*, 1 reel; *The Making of Wrought Iron*, 1 reel; *Behind the Scenes in the Metropolitan Museum*, 2 reels; *The Making of a Stained-Glass Window*, 3 reels; *Childe Hassam - Artist*, 1 reel; *The Making of a Bronze Statue*, 2 reels; *Vasantasena*, an incident in a tenth-century Indian story, 2 reels; *The Etcher's Art*, 2 reels; *Dry-point—A Demonstration*, 2 reels; *Glass Blowing, with Specimens of Ancient and Modern Blown Glass*, 2 reels.

All of the films here listed, with a very few exceptions, are distributed by the Museum for a nominal fee and transportation charges. Public schools of the City of New York may have the use of the films without charge. Reservations should be made at least a month in advance. Shipment is made to reach the place of showing one day before the date of use; return shipment is

to be made on the day following the showing. Communications regarding rental of films should be addressed to Ralph S. Hawkins, Assistant in Charge of Cinema Work of the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

THE Y. M. C. A. Motion Picture Bureau is now offering in its 1933-34 Catalog a very interesting block of 16 mm. subjects. Many of these pictures are available without rental, while others can be secured at a very modest rental rate.

If you have not secured a copy of the catalog, we suggest that you write to the Y. M. C. A. Motion Picture Bureau at 347 Madison Avenue, New York City, for one. No non-theatrical group, club, school or church presenting motion pictures for either religious or secular use should be without it. Religious groups particularly will find many helpful film suggestions. It lists also many 35 mm. films in both sound and silent form. All films are on safety stock.

The Motion Picture Bureau of the Y. M. C. A. is serving the C. C. C. Camps. Many of these camps have requested the industrial pictures. These pictures are used as suggested possibilities of future employment and the selection of a vocation. Personnel managers in industry have found these films equally valuable in readjusting their personnel, but the C. C. C. Camps provide an unusual opportunity to be of greater service to the young men now enrolled in government service.

DARTMOUTH College has a movie service which offers a visual story of the institution's activities. The pictures are sent to alumni clubs, schools and other organizations or to individuals who may be interested. They are on 16 mm. stock and the regular charge is \$15 for the year's service or \$5 for a single rental, although for educational institutions a lower rate is usually charged. Beginning last winter a series was started based on student written scenarios, acted by students and directed by the coach of the Dartmouth Players, a student

dramatic organization. All the films show typical Dartmouth activities at various seasons of the year—football, winter sports, carnival, baseball, as well as academic scenes and pictures of the College and town.

The pictures are in constant demand from the alumni as well as many schools and other groups interested in Dartmouth, we learn from Mr. Sidney C. Hayward, Secretary in the Offices of Administration. He writes that he would be pleased to hear from any one who would like to secure some Dartmouth films for showing. Doubtless Council groups will find these of interest in their program plans and will want to learn more details of bookings by writing to Mr. Hayward, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H.

The Alumnae Association of Smith College, Northampton, Mass., has also used the motion picture. A number of pictures have been taken for the Smith College Clubs, located in various parts of the United States. They are entirely of college scenes and are local in character, the Association reports. A film showing the life of a freshman, which might be interesting to the public, was completed in December. The rental charge for the films which are on 16 mm. stock is \$2.00 for any number of reels, plus the postage.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

LET'S FALL IN LOVE—Edmund Lowe, Ann Sothorn and Gregory Ratoff. Columbia. An entertaining light picture with some pleasant songs by Irving Berlin and much fine comedy by Gregory Ratoff as a motion picture producer who is fooled by his director into believing that their new star is the great Swedish beauty for whom they have been searching. *Family.*

MADAME SPY—Fay Wray and Nils Asther. Universal. A story of the spy system during the World War—a woman agent marries in order to learn the secrets of the enemy but she does not reckon with love. *Family.*

*MASSACRE—Richard Barthelmess. First National. An absorbing picture of the wrongs done to the Indians by unscrupulous govern-

ment officials. The excellent propaganda never detracts from the high entertainment value of the picture. The star plays the part of a college bred Indian who returns to the reservation and seeing the suffering of his people takes up their cause. *Family*.

*MISS FANE'S BABY IS STOLEN—*Dorothy Weick, Alice Brady and Baby LeRoy. Paramount.* A good story at this time as it deals with kidnapping—a screen actress' baby is kidnapped and she regains it only after she goes to the police. *Family*.

MR. SKITCH—*Will Rogers and ZaSu Pitts. Fox.* Mr. Skitch takes his family from Missouri to California and back. Pleasant homespun Americana, to which some pleasant imitations by Florence Esmond add amusing variety. *Family*.

THE SAGEBRUSH TRAIL—*John Wayne. Monogram.* The hero of this Western bids fare to become a rival of Tarzan's when it comes to leaping and jumping on horses. The riding is excellent and the plot though trite has its novel moments. *Family*.

SHADOWS OF SING SING—*Bruce Cabot and Mary Brian. Columbia.* The story of a boy who becomes involved in a murder but his father who is head of the identification bureau at Sing Sing, helps him prove his innocence. *Mature*.

SLEEPERS EAST—*Wynne Gibson. Fox.* Interesting drama in which a girl out of prison on probation and trying to make good, becomes an important witness in a murder case. Although some parts of the picture, such as the court room scenes, are hackneyed the acting of the star and of the engineer on the train, where much of the action takes place, add human interest to the film. *Mature*.

*SMOKY—*Victor Jory and "Smoky." From the book by Will James. Fox.* A remarkably vivid and truthful picture of the life of a cow-pony, which incidentally gives one of the best reproductions of Western ranch life. The plot is simple, but many of the incidents are tense in interest and the whole film is unusually good. *Family. Junior matinee*.

THE SON OF KONG—*Robert Armstrong. RKO Radio.* Back on Kong's island and a little Kong—just twelve feet high—befriends the adventurers and shows almost human qualities. Without the horrors and extravagant excitement of *King Kong* it is more suitable for juveniles than grown-ups. *Junior matinee*.

WOMEN IN HIS LIFE—*Otto Kruger. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A story of how a lawyer tracked down a murderer, through a set of interesting complications that keep the interest keen. Some quite effective acting and direction. *Mature*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

(1 reel each)

BRITISH GUIANA (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro Gold-Mayer. Family.*
 *FLEMISH FOLKS (Magic Carpet)—*Fox. Family. Junior matinee.*
 HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 6—*Paramount. Family.*
 ITALY THE OLD AND THE NEW (Newman Musical Journey)—*Vitaphone. Family.*
 JERUSALEM THE HOLY CITY (Newman Musical Journey)—*Vitaphone. Family.*
 JUMPING GIANTS (Sportlight)—Big game fishing. *Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
 LONDON MEDLEY (Magic Carpet)—*Fox. Family. Junior matinee.*
 PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 6—*Paramount. Family.*
 SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 6—*Paramount. Family.*
 *SENTINELS OF THE SEA (Magic Carpet)—Lighthouses, lightships, etc. *Fox. Family. Junior matinee.*
 STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 35—*Universal. Family. Junior matinee.*
 *TUNISIAN TRAVELS (Magic Carpet)—*Fox. Family. Junior matinee.*

CARTOONS

(1 reel each)

THE AUTO SHOW (Scrappy)—*Columbia. Junior matinee.*
 BUDDY'S SHOW BOAT (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone. Family.*
 CHICKEN REEL (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal. Family. Junior matinee.*
 GIANTLAND (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists. Family. Junior matinee.*
 IN VENICE (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Family.*
 KEEPS RAININ' ALL THE TIME (Bouncing Ball)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
 *"THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS" (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists. Family. Junior matinee.*
 PALS (Little King)—*RKO Radio. Family. Junior matinee.*
 SEASIN'S GREETINGS (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
 SING BABIES SING (Screen Songs)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
 WILD ELEPHINKS (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*

SKITS, MUSICALS, COMEDIES AND SERIALS

(1 reel each unless marked otherwise)

AIR MANIACS—Some good stunt flying. *Vince Barnett. Educational. Family.*
 BUSINESS IS A PLEASURE—Musical comedy. *Vitaphone, 2 reels. Family.*
 DAY DREAMS—Christmas novelty. *Educational. Family. Junior matinee.*
 EMMA'S DILEMMA (Movietone Tintypes)—*Edison film of 1911. Fox. Family.*
 GOOFY MOVIES NO. 1—Parody on newsreels. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family.*
 KISSING TIME—Operetta. *Vitaphone, 2 reels. Family.*
 LITTLE JACK LITTLE—Singing his own songs. *Vitaphone. Family.*
 LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG (Movie Tintypes)—*Edison film of 1910. Fox. Family.*
 LUNCHEON AT TWELVE—Charley Chase. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. Family.*
 MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND—*Vitaphone. Family.*
 THE MYSTERY SQUADRON (Serial)—No. 1—The Black Ace (3 reels)—No. 2—The Fatal Warning (2 reels); No. 3—The Black Ace Strikes (2 reels); *Bob Steele. Mascot. Family. Junior matinee.*
 ODOR IN THE COURT—Clark and McCullough. *RKO Radio, 2 reels. Family.*
 THE OLD BUGLER—An old veteran adopts a small boy and dog. *Chic Sale. Paramount, 2 reels. Family. Junior matinee.*
 OX APPROVAL—Adopting a baby. *Julia Sanderson and Frank Crummit. RKO Radio, 2 reels. Family.*
 PARDON MY PUPS—Junior learns to like dogs. *Educational, 2 reels. Family. Junior matinee.*
 POP'S PAL—Squabbles between two grandfathers. *Billy Beran and George Bickel. Educational, 2 reels. Family.*
 THOSE WERE THE DAYS—George Myers and his song compositions. *Vitaphone. Family.*
 THE TUNE DETECTIVE—Sigmund Spaeth shows contrast between music of Schubert and the present music. *Vitaphone. Family.*
 THE WOLF DOG (Serial)—No. 12—Danger Lights; *Rin-Tin-Tin, Jr. Mascot, 2 reels. Junior matinee.*

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

- National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
 - \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
 - \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups
- Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
 - \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine
- Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) . . . 25c
- Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) . free
- Special film lists each 10c
- Junior Matinee Films
- Foreign Films
- Educational Films
- Selected Book-Films
- Films on Subjects of Timely Interest
- Exceptional Photoplays
- Musical Films

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. IX, No. 2



February, 1934

Jean Cocteau's
"Blood of a Poet"

Dr. Watson's
"Lot in Sodom"

Two Queens

Eskimo

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

20 cents a copy

\$2.00 a year

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

ALL OF ME—Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins and George Raft. From the stage play "Chrysalis" by Rose Porter. Paramount. Interesting story of a wealthy girl who is afraid to marry a poor man and who realizes what real love is when she sees the love of an ex-convict and his girl and their happiness even in adversity. *Mature.*

THE BATTLING BUCKAROO—Lane Chandler. First Division. Western story, mostly adventure with the barest suggestion of a love story—a good deal of exciting trick riding that would appeal to youngsters. *Family. Junior matinee.*

BEDSIDE—Warren William. First National. Story which holds the interest in spite of technical flaws—a man who practices medicine without a license manages to evade the law until he refuses to operate on the woman he loves. *Mature.*

BELOVED—John Boles and Gloria Stuart. Universal. Life history of a composer dealing with his desire to make his son and grandson appreciate music and his unhappiness at the advent of jazz. Good possibilities but too long and over-sentimentalized. *Family.*

***CAROLINA**—Lionel Barrymore and Janet Gaynor. From the play "The House of Connelly" by Paul Green. Fox. The story of the rehabilitation of an aristocratic old Southern family, gone to seed through living only on the memories of its past glories. Atmospherically lovely, and offering one of Lionel Barrymore's best characterizations. *Family.*

***CATHERINE THE GREAT**—Elizabeth Bergner and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. United Artists.

Colorful historical film of the events which made Catherine the Empress of Russia and took her insane young husband from the throne, ending before that part of the Empress' career for which she is most notorious. Elizabeth Bergner is splendid and young Fairbanks better than ever. *Mature.*

EASY TO LOVE—Adolphe Menjou, Genevieve Tobin and Edward Everett Horton. Warner. A comedy of marital infidelity, in which a wife starts philandering in order to win back her philandering husband. What is called "sophisticated." *Mature.*

EVER SINCE EVE—George O'Brien and Mary Brian. From the story "Heir to the Hoorah" by Paul Armstrong. Fox. Pleasant comedy in which most of the difficulties come from a young man's believing he has been married for his money. *Family.*

FASHIONS OF 1934—William Powell and Bette Davis. First National. A gay story of polite chisellers in the fashion racket, with an attractive excursion into musical show business. Rapid in movement and amusing. *Mature.*

THE FIGHTING CODE—Buck Jones. Columbia. A vigorous picture of the old West, familiar in its general outlines but well done and made exciting by sincerity and tense situations. *Family.*

FUGITIVE LOVERS—Robert Montgomery and Madge Evans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The pursuit of an escaped prisoner in a transcontinental bus. Rather long but there are tense moments and amusing performances by Ted Healy and Nat Pendleton. The direction is unusually individual. *Family.*

THE GHOST TRAIN—Jack Hulbert and Cecilie Courtneidge. Gaumont British. A British adventure picture with some excellent train scenes and a good deal of comedy. *Family.*

HI NELLIE—Paul Muni. Warner. An excellent newspaper story with a little bit of murder mystery thrown in. The story diverges somewhat from the stereotyped newspaper film and the acting of the star as usual is outstanding. *Family.*

HOLD THAT GIRL—James Dunn and Claire Trevor. Fox. Comedy melodrama, with streaks of romance, about a police detective and a girl police-reporter. Lively and entertaining. *Family.*

***I AM SUZANNE**—Lilian Harvey and Gene Raymond. Fox. Highly original picture of life among some puppeteers, in which Podrecca's Piccoli marionettes supply a large amount of the entertainment. Tuneful, gay and romantic. *Family. Junior matinee.*

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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An Addition to the General Committee

THE election of Dr. Worth M. Tippy to the General Committee of the National Board of Review is announced to our readers.

Dr. Tippy is Executive Secretary of the Department of the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of Churches, with responsibility for the Council's relations to industry, labor, social work, family welfare, and social legislation. He has had personal executive charge of the Federal Council's Committee on Motion Pictures since its organization and has developed its policy.

Dr. Tippy came to the Federal Council from the pastorate of the Madison Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in February, 1917, and is one of the longest time officials of the Council. He is a graduate of

De Pauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, and was for two years a graduate scholar in the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University. He is at present Executive Chairman of the Church Conference of Social Work and a member of the Executive

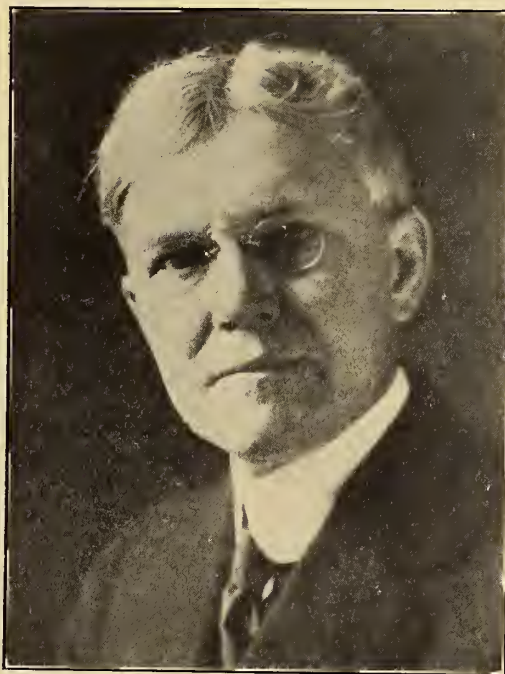
Committee of the International Conference of Social Work. He has been one of the leaders in the Universal Christian Conference of Life and Work which first met in Stockholm in 1925, and was American editor of its international journal until its discontinuance. Dr.

Tippy is the author of several books and is a frequent contributor to religious and social periodicals and magazines, and is a member of several religious and learned societies.

The Federal Council's policy on motion pictures is to develop the use of the motion picture for the purposes of religion, to utilize the educational forces of the churches for the creation of a more critical taste in the public, to participate in the formation of better films councils, and to join in well-

conceived efforts for an intelligent social control over the industry, as is being done over all industries. The Federal Council's Committee is opposed to the principle of censorship.

(Continued on page 19)



Dr. Worth M. Tippy

Jean Cocteau and "The Blood of a Poet"

Since "*Le Sang d'un Poète*" (*The Blood of a Poet*) was selected by the National Board of Review as one of the ten best European films of 1933, and is to be shown specially in connection with the Board's Annual Conference this month, the following is printed both as a kind of critique and as an expression of M. Jean Cocteau's own thoughts about the film he directed. It is a translation of his remarks made last year before an audience at the *Vieux-Colombier*, one of the little art cinema theatres in Paris.

IT is a bit ridiculous to make a speech to a gathering like this. One would have to do it every evening. You are a gathering of the elect, with a sort of divination of words before they are spoken and images before they are shown. But I shall speak, since I promised to.

I shall first quote to you a bit of praise and a bit of criticism. Here is the praise:

It comes from a woman who works in my house. She had asked me for tickets for the presentation of this film, *The Blood of*

a Poet, and I was stupid enough to be afraid of her seeing it. I said to myself: "After seeing this film she won't want to work for me any longer." Well, she thanked me, in these words: "I've seen your film. It is like passing an hour in another world." That is beautiful praise, isn't it?

And now the criticism: it comes from an American critic, who puts it this way:

He reproaches me for using film as it were a sacred material, as lasting as a painting or a book. He does not rate the cinema as an inferior art, but he does consider, and rightly, that a reel unrolls rapidly, that the public is looking for diversion above everything else, that film is fragile, and tries to express all the forces of its spirit through the medium of a material so fleeting and delicate that the first pictures of Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton can no longer be seen except in scarce and terribly mutilated films. I could add that the cinema is pro-



"The mouth of one of his creations stays in his hand like a wound."



The poet gambles with his Destiny while the angel takes away his youth.

gressing every day, and that relief, color, etc., will make us forget films that at the moment seem marvelous to us. That is so. But for four weeks this film has been unreeling before audiences so attentive, so excited and fervent, that I ask myself if after all there is not being formed an anonymous public that is looking for something else in the cinema besides diversion. The same American critic congratulates me on having invented the "tragic gag." I did not invent the tragic gag, but I have used it as much as possible. The gag is a surprise—really a godsend. Here is a typical one: Charlie Chaplin swallows a whistle and all the dogs follow him. The audience bursts into laughter. With the tragic gag I do not expect the audience to laugh (if they laughed I would have missed my point). But I want of them a black silence, one almost as violent as laughter.

I also wish to point out at once my own good luck. The cinema is almost impossible

to get into. It cannot fall into the hands of poets, or if it does it demands the most difficult concessions from them. As for the film you are about to see, I was left unhampered. It is a unique case, and if the film is liked this must be taken into account lest I be given too much credit. In a film death can be killed, literature can be killed, poetry can be made to live a direct life. Imagine what the cinema of the poets could be! But alas, I repeat that the cinema is a business you cannot trifle with.

In *The Blood of a Poet* I am trying to picture the poet's inner self, as Williamson pictures the bottom of the sea. It means going down into myself, into my night, the bell going down to the bottommost depths. It means taking the poetic state by surprise. Many people imagine that the poetic state doesn't exist, that it is a sort of voluntary excitation. Really, even people who believe they are farthest from the poetic state are acquainted with it. Suppose they are remem-

bering a great sorrow, a great weariness. If they sit down before the fire they doze, but they do not sleep. Soon associations awake in them, which are not associations of ideas, or of images, or of memories. Rather are they monsters, coupling—secrets that vanish in the light, a whole world terrible, equivocal, enigmatic—very capable of giving an idea of the nightmare in which poets live, which makes their life very stirring and very hard, and which the public is often wrong in taking for an extraordinary intoxication.

Naturally, nothing is harder to get close to than the essence of poetry. It is like a deer. Fault is found with the motion pictures of Africa because they are tricked. How can they help it? In filming lions and the roaring of lions, in order to get something more alive and convincing than mere rug-skins or sounds made by rubbing lamp-chimneys, our explorers are obliged to become artists, that is to say, to create the illusion of what they have seen and heard by means of rugs and lamp chimneys as they are managed by the Hollywood specialists. I won't conceal from you that I have used tricks to make *poetry* visible and audible. Here are some examples:

First, you will see the character of the Poet going into a mirror. After that he is swimming in a world which none of us know but which I imagine. That mirror takes him into a passage-way, and his gait is the gait of dreams. It is neither swimming nor flying. It is something else, with no resemblance to anything. To picture that is not easy. To do it in slow-motion would be commonplace. So I had the walls of the scenery nailed to the floor and took the scene shooting down. The character lies down and drags himself along instead of walking, and when the picture is turned upright you see a man walking in a very painful and strange fashion, and his muscular movements do not correspond with the efforts of his walk.

Miss Miller actually has pale eyes, but sometimes in my film she has dark eyes. That is because I have painted eyes on her eyelids. I did not paint them with any esthetic motive, to give her the appearance of a mask of Antinoë. I painted them because, when she is blind, she walks like a

blind person, and as on the screen it is not obvious that her eyes are false, that unreal walk of hers adds to the unreality of her character.

Another trick: it was necessary to show the statue of the poet destroyed by the children at play, by that childishness that ravishes everything and respects nothing. The stone statue had to disappear as if it were made of snow. It was necessary, then, to contrast this miracle with a very realistic scene, a sort of document, to throw it into relief. I pushed realism so far as to replace real snow with Parisian slush, that gray slime with which the children of Paris fight and which, certainly, is less photogenique and less alluring than the beautiful Russian snow.

The public often makes the mistake of believing that artists are making fun of them. That is impossible. First because the artist would gain nothing by it, then because the singularly backbreaking labor of motion picture making absorbs too much for one to think. For thought is substituted a somnambulistic mechanism. Imagine the labor of a film. You arrive at six in the morning—the hour of the guillotine—and until midnight you go from studio to studio. You try not to ruin the business for which you are working. You do not eat. You sleep standing up. You stumble. After four days, unless you have a very strong American constitution or are surrounded by assistants, your head is ringing. You swim. You don't know where you are. That is one of the reasons why cinematography will be a superb poetic instrument. To sleep standing, that is saying things that you don't say to anyone. You open up: shadows cease to be shadows. The diving bell of which I was just speaking gets into motion, and that is why the film you are about to see is a sort of confessional and also as little clear as possible, in the sense in which spectators understand the word.

Even if I wished to synopsise the film I could not. It has even been said, as a compliment to me, that the film lacks technique. That is inaccurate. There is no technique of the film. There is the technique that each finds for himself. If you are drowning you manage to swim. You invent, perforce, your own method of swimming. I

had never touched motion picture making. I was admirably surrounded and seconded, and I have no complaint to make of any of my colleagues for having let me down. I was the one who insisted on being let alone, to find out a method that expressed me. I contented myself with saying to Perinal: "Perinal, I need a vicious lighting," or: "Perinal, I need a documentary (realistic) lighting," or: "Perinal, I need an uneasy lighting." You see how easy his job was. He would not answer. He would toss his head, and I would get what I wanted. How in the world do picture-makers make so many films and live happily! One dies. One asks one's self if one will get to the end of the day alive. There is Miss Miller, for example, who is admirable (my interpreters are admirable because in choosing them I did not think of their physical beauty but of their moral fibre, for in a film the faces are huge and the eyes reveal everything) well,

she did not know she had played her role in the film. She said: "It's I! It's I! It's impossible!" She remembered only having been seated in a chair for hours, having slept, having fainted, having eaten sandwiches and drunk warm beer. Note that I do not complain and that I regret nothing. For when the film is marvelously planned the result is something too clear, too brilliant, which gets out of style. To the Rolls Royce that changes its form and mechanism quickly I prefer the wheelbarrow. It isn't really bad to be a victim of the luxury of the studios where the directors despise poets. It even happened that these directors helped me, with the intention of doing me harm. One day they were having the rugs shaken, to drive me out, and it is that dust that silvers all the end of the film and gives it an atmosphere of apotheosis.

As I was just telling you, one cannot synopsise such a film as this. I could give



The blind uncertainty of the poet's glory after his death.

you an interpretation that suits me. I could tell you that the solitude of the poet is so great, and that he so lives what he creates, that the mouth of one of his creations stays in his hand like a wound, and that he loves that mouth, that he loves himself, in sum—and that he wakes in the morning with that mouth against him, like a chance encounter, and that he tries to get rid of it, and that he gets rid of it on a dead statue—and that that statue comes to life, and that she avenges herself, and that she launches him on some fearful adventures. I could tell you that the snowball fight is the poet's childhood, and that when he plays that game of cards with his Muse, with his Glory, with his Destiny, he cheats in taking from his childhood what he should get out of himself. I could then tell you that having tried for worldly glory he falls into that "mortal ennui of immortality" on which one muses before all the tombs of the great. And I would be right in telling you this, but I would also be wrong, for that would be a text written after the fact, following the pictures. Besides, are these pictures? Life makes great pictures without knowing it. The drama of Golgotha did not take place for painters. While I was working, I repeat, I was not thinking of anything, and that is why you must let the film produce its effect like Auric's admirable music that accompanies it, and like all the music of the world. Music gives a nameless food to our emotions, to our memories, and if each one of you finds a meaning in this film that suits him, I deem that I have attained my purpose.

I must add that three passages in this film have created serious misunderstanding.

A title first—the Profanation of the Host. I remember that it was borrowed from a canvas of Paolo Uccello's that figured at the Italian Exposition in London. The meaning of this title? Blood profanes the snow. A point, that's all.

Then that bleeding child. I was thinking that in motion pictures there should be no distortions in space, and that the Russian films tire us with their faces shot from above and from below, etc. I wanted to take my film direct, without artificiality. But if the cinema forbids distortions in space, it permits distortions in time. A story of my

childhood haunts me continually. You can find it in several of my works. A young boy hurt by a snowball. In "Enfants Terribles" the child doesn't die. In my film the child dies. It is not resuming a theme. It is all a mythology which the poet keeps digging up, and which he puts under other angles. The bleeding child would in reality have bled very little, just a nose bleed. In my memory he vomited blood. I wasn't intending to direct a realistic scene, but memory distorted that scene.

There is also the scene of the loges with the people applauding, not for a dead child as has been believed. The child has already been taken away by the angel when the loges applaud, and it is the poet's killing himself that they applaud. Poets, to live, often have to die, and spend not only the red blood of the heart but that white blood of the soul which they pour out and which lets them follow its trail. Applause comes only at this price. They must give everything to get the least approbation.

To end this preamble, for which I apologize, for I am not in the habit of improvising and the public intimidates me tremendously, I would say to you that a poet is very little real. When a poet speaks, wakened from the slumber in which he composes his works, it is as if the old women who act as mediums at Salpêtrière were to talk when not in a trance. A poet's work detests and consumes him. There is no place on the earth for the poet and his work together. His work profits from the poet, and it is after his death that the poet will profit from his work. Moreover, the public likes dead poets best, and it is right. A poet who isn't dead is an anachronism. And it is so that I would not present this monstrous spectacle that I long since retired from the world. I am now, ladies and gentlemen, going to make room for a form of me, perhaps obscure, perhaps painful, but a thousand times truer than the one which is speaking to you and which you are now looking at.





The symbol expressing—The immortality, like fading overtures, of the poet's art?

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Two Queens

Catherine the Great

Original screen story of Lajos Biro, Arthur Wimperis and Melchior Lengyel; directed by Paul Czinner; photographed by Georges Perinal; a Korda-Toeplitz production presented by London Film Productions, Ltd.; released through United Artists.

The cast

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Grand Duke Peter | Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. |
| Catherine | Elizabeth Bergner |
| Empress Elizabeth | Flora Robson |
| Lecocq | Gerald du Maurier |
| Princess Anhalt-Zerbst | Irene Vanbrugh |
| Katushienka | Joan Gardner |
| Countess Olga | Dorothy Hale |
| Countess Vorontzova | Diana Napier |
| Grigory Orlov | Clifford Jones |
| Bestujhev | Gibb MacLaughlin |
| Ogarev | Clifford Heatherley |

Queen Christina

Original screen story by Salka Viertel and Margaret P. Levino; dialogue by S. N. Behrman; directed by Rouben Mamoulian; photographed by William Daniels; produced by Walter Wanger; distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Christina | Greta Garbo |
| Antonio | John Gilbert |
| Magnus | Ian Keith |
| Oxenstierna | Lewis Stone |
| Ebba | Elizabeth Young |
| Aage | C. Aubrey Smith |
| Charles | Reginald Owen |
| French Ambassador | Georges Renevent |
| General | Gustav von Seyffertitz |
| Archbishop | David Torrence |
| Innikper | Ferdinand Munier |

DRAMATISTS since away back—Shakespeare or even the Greeks—have felt free to do what they pleased with history for the sake of whatever effect they were after, so perhaps the same privi-

lege must be granted to motion picture scenarists. Whether such a privilege be granted or not, the people who wrote *Catherine the Great* and *Queen Christina* have taken it, and the reason must be that the results were thought more likely to please at the box office.

The career of the North German Princess who became Catherine the Second of Russia is most easily remembered for the imperial lady's love adventures. The young queen of this film will be remembered for her part in other fields of dramatic activity and one should not look to *Catherine the Great* for the life of a *grande amoureuse*—no more virtuous Cinderella ever appeared upon the screen than the heroine of this handsome film. In fact the line of historical distortion in this case takes the direction of making the young Catherine a singularly innocent and high-minded person, who was finally persuaded to seize the throne from her highly erratic husband solely for the good of Russia, and Orlov—actually the third lover—appears in the offing only as a platonically friendly patriot. Two predecessors, one of them the father of the future Czar Paul, are left out completely, and the picture ends with the young widowed empress—widowed against her will!—in a state of gentle amazement that maybe there is someone in the world to love her.

The film, in its stately and handsomely mounted way, gives a highly interesting picture of the Russian court in the days of the great Peter's eccentric daughter Elizabeth, whose character provides the off-color so conspicuously lacking in Catherine. The drama—and it is an engrossing and exciting



Elizabeth Bergner and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., as Catherine and the Grand Duke Peter in "Catherine the Great."

one—concerns Catherine's marriage to the young Grand Duke Peter, he of the strange mental twists that verged often on sheer insanity. It develops eventually into a struggle to save Russia from a mad Czar, and on the triumphant issue of that struggle the picture ends, with Catherine just on the threshold of her remarkable career as a ruler.

The chief personal interest in the picture is the screen debut—for America—of one of Germany's leading actresses and the arrival of young Douglas Fairbanks in the ranks of mature actors. Elizabeth Bergner had her European fame before Garbo or Dietrich were heard of. In this film she hasn't the chance for some of the subtly poetic acting that distinguishes her, but the way she builds up the character of Catherine from an almost negligible child to a leader of armies is something that can be appreciated only by looking back upon it and remembering the gradual steps by which, submerging her per-

sonality in the part, she has shown the growth from a person whose first appearance on the screen is hardly noticed to a personage who in the end dominates the whole drama.

Queen Christina follows quite closely the career of Sweden's notorious seventeenth century queen as it was known to most of her contemporaries, without benefit of modern pathological psychology. The one serious concession it makes to presumed movie demands is in giving Christina an abiding passionate love for the Spanish ambassador, whereas the rumors of the time credited her with no more than a passing affair of scandal. That concession is understandable—what would a Garbo film be without passionate love? Where the film falls down as an historical picture is chiefly in its failure to suggest the cold and rugged Sweden of those rough days when the warrior sons of the Vikings took up the Protestant banner and



The scene in "Queen Christina" in which the Spanish Ambassador (John Gilbert) takes the Queen (Garbo) for a man.

made such a stir in Europe. Mamoulian's silken direction has a strangely softening effect on the scenes he is depicting, which distorts history far more than mere departures from recorded fact.

But the film gives Garbo space—and magnificent space—for the loveliest characterization she has yet offered. With beauty, with dignity, with deeply moving poignancy and a wise, serene humor, she lifts a rather shallow story into something beyond the dimensions of the scenario. Never, with perhaps the exception of *As You Desire Me*, has Garbo been given a story worthy of her fine spirit and beautiful art, but here she has been given a part in which she can create ilimitably beyond the bounds set by the plot craftsmen. The only assistance she has is from the dialogue provided by S. N. Behrman, who has written words fitting the extraordinary queen for whom they were composed.—J. S. H.

Eskimo

From the books "Der Eskimo" and "Die Flucht ins Weisse Land" by Peter Freuchen; directed by W. S. Van Dyke; photographed by Clyde Devinna, Josiah Roberts, George Nogle and Leonard Smith; produced by Hunt Stromberg; distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; with a native cast.

Eskimo, like *Tabu*, is neither a pure racial document nor is it Hollywood fiction. It lies somewhere between, an odd miscegenation of race and articulated fable. There seems to be a studio formula for these exotic films, the native and the white man, rape, murder and mayhem. Crime Passionel. I have not read Peter Freuchen's "Eskimo," from which the film is derived; perhaps the book was fuller in incident, more special to the Eskimo. There must be other tribal legends.

Yet *Eskimo* is by no means an average, or a mediocre, film. It is, at moments, extraordinarily lovely, with the sort of beauty

that comes of human beings isolated in nature, struggling to survive, yet with a quietness in them in the midst of body hunger. The ice plains are bare and snow sweeps over them, chilling one's marrow. The winter is lean and hunger and death may lie over the igloos. Then there is spring, in the clear ripple of the river when the hunter stands, spearing his fish, and a bird in mid air, from the boat, a long, clean sweep of arm and body, exact and beautiful.

Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* was truer, its Eskimos purer in strain. One feels here, without knowing, that in *Eskimo* Hollywood has somewhere diluted the blood. Yet in Flaherty's film there was no excitement, no impact of race and the predatory civilization that lays its ways upon the native. *Nanook* was a half truth, an isolated record in pictures, incomplete, unrelated. *Eskimo* is a half truth, too, but in a different way. It gives one a sense of living, of alien feel-

ing, of momentary beauty in barrenness. Then it adulterates all this with natives that are not Eskimos, and an undue accent on sex.

It is for its details, its individual scenes, that one considers *Eskimo*, not as a whole. It is for the fight to the death of the two locking bucks of the caribou herd, the magnificence of the stampede across the wastes of snow, animals plunging into the river with the small band of men down upon them with spears and imprecations, fighting death in hunger. There is the harpooning of the whale, the landing of the walrus, incidents in a hunting life, with the men, alert and sure leaping about in their reversible kayaks, all of them moving to a certain basic rhythm.

But the love scenes on which the fiction depends, the Eskimo way of lending a wife to a friend who is without one, but not to a white man, without his consent, do not feel true. I do not mean that this is not the cus-



The feast after the great caribou hunt in "Eskimo."



Mala, the Eskimo, and the necklace of his lost wife.

tom, but that the emphasis in filming these scenes is wrong, and the manner too close to that of the studios to seem born in the wastes of the Arctic. There is rape, and consequent murder of the white trader who causes the death of the Eskimo woman; the hunt is now on, with the Northwest Royal Mounted in possession of the field. The film begins to lag, the narrative grows pedestrian here, and there is interpolated a comic interlude with the subtlety of *What Price Glory*.

W. S. Van Dyke did this before, in *White Shadows of the South Seas*, commenced by Flaherty. He did it again in *Trader Horn*. As a director, he lacks sincerity, and a sense of style, that can transmit honestly and with simplicity the content of his film. So *Eskimo* is half true and half Hollywood. The two will always lie, like palimpsests, unmerged. In *Eskimo* one resents this; because it is so close to beauty, its adulteration is the more disastrous.—E. G.

Lot in Sodom

Produced (written, directed and photographed) by Dr. John S. Watson, Jr., and Melville Weber, musical score by Louis Siegel. Distributed by Dull'ord Pictures, Inc.

The cast

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Lot</i> | <i>Frederick Haak</i> |
| <i>Lot's wife</i> | <i>Hildegard Watson</i> |
| <i>Lot's daughter</i> | <i>Dorothea Haus</i> |
| <i>The Angel</i> | <i>Lewis Whitbeck, Jr.</i> |

ANYONE who has seen *The Fall of the House of Usher* will be eager to find out what its producers have done in their latest film. *Lot in Sodom* turns out to be an amazingly effective cinematic creation. It has a scenario that tells a story, but it almost completely avoids explicit literal statement. It "tells," in the usual sense, no more than the brief Old Testament narrative tells, of that wicked city of the plain upon which God sent destruction, and of the saving of God's good

man, Lot. But the course of events is not hard to follow, and upon the plot action is built a structure of pictorial overtones, that, through the eye, works upon the senses with an effect like that of symphonic music, adding immensely to the emotional values implicit in the action.

There have been plenty of films before, seeking for new ways to create mood through the medium of photography in motion, but they have usually been lacking in dramatic content and even the best of them have had the effect of not having completely passed the experimental stage. *Lot in Sodom* in its brief two reels, has definitely gone beyond the point where the striving of the creator is apparent—his creation is so complete that it is no more possible at first sight to detach the separate elements from their confluence than it is to isolate specific chords



A group in the doomed city of the plain in "Lot in Sodom."

and instrumental combinations in a piece of orchestral music. Above all, it has—what so many advanced films lack—a definite, unified dramatic impact, to which every bit of movement, whether depicting character, event or mood, contributes an indispensable part. The picture is beyond argument one of the most important creations of the American cinema.—J. S. H.



Lot's wife, who looked back at the wicked city.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

THE Motion Picture Chairman of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs works closely with the Birmingham (Ala.) Better Films Council, extending the projects which are part of the Committee activity throughout the state and reporting interesting state activity to the city Council.

Mrs. Edgar Collins has effectively served both as State Motion Picture Chairman and as president of the Birmingham Council. Some of the objectives which she outlined for the year 1932-33 were: where possible encourage Better Films Councils; strive to stimulate interest in better types of films leaving others alone; conduct essay contests in schools; sponsor junior matinees; give talks in clubs and P.-T. A.'s on motion pictures; stress family night programs; urge educational pictures wherever possible in school work.

By the end of the year success was reported in all of these undertakings. Twenty-three talks were made to clubs and P.-T. A.'s urging them to support the best pictures and to select carefully their children's film entertainment. Also strong emphasis was laid on mothers or some older member of the family accompanying the child to the movies. P.-T. A. representatives in different schools in Birmingham post on bulletin boards films recommended for young people for Friday and Saturday. Four thousand bulletins and 800 post cards were sent out and a great number of letters were written to encourage the making of good motion pictures.

Eighty-five federated clubs and 25 P.-T. A.'s are affiliated with the Better Films Council and cooperate with it. In January 1932 Mrs. E. B. Henry was elected president of the Council.

A monthly sheet is issued announcing forthcoming meetings of the Council and containing items of interest and of exhortation to its members, the latter showing that to be a member of the Council one must be active. The following paragraphs quoted from one bulletin were addressed re-

spectively to the representatives and to the visiting committees:

"Are you as representative of your organization, doing your full duty to your club and to the Better Films Council? Remember it is part of your duty to read the Better Films Column and find out which are the best screen offerings for the week and call attention of your club members either by phone or word of mouth to worthwhile films. Furthermore if you are a P.-T. A. representative you should see that the movies for the young are posted at your school on Friday of each week."

"Are you helping the managers of your neighborhood theatres by your advice as to the bookings for his theatres? Especially should you urge him to book suitable pictures for children on Saturdays. Do you spread the word among the neighbors when there is a worthwhile film at your theatre? Are you helping this neighborhood industry in every way possible? Do you speak a good word to the manager when his picture is clean and fine?"

Fine cooperation is received from the newspapers of the city. The Birmingham News and the Birmingham Post have for long carried columns each week giving lists of pictures recommended and the audience suitability of such films. At the September 1932 meeting a member of the staff of the Post talked on the value of community cooperation to secure better films. This speaker keeps in touch with the work through the regular publicity she gives the column.

Birmingham is one of the cities in which the Photoplay Appreciation course outlined by the National Council of Teachers of English is being conducted in the schools. The Council showed a keen interest, which it continues, in helping this work to get started.

Two worthwhile subjects were presented at the September 1933 meeting. They were "How Clubs Can Cooperate with the Better Films Council to secure Better Pictures for Birmingham" and "P.-T. A. Influence that

Can and Must Be Exerted if We Are to Improve Films."

It is an annual custom of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs to offer a prize of \$10 for the best essay on better films activity. The subject for 1933 was "Alabama's Needs for Better Films Groups" and the winner was Miss Frances Youngblood, of the Birmingham News staff. We are privileged to quote the following from her interesting paper:

"'Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who write the laws,' said the poet. This axiom might be paraphrased to read, 'Let me make the pictures for a nation, and the laws will take care of themselves.'"

"For many years educational exponents have stressed the importance of visual education, declaring that people learn quicker through the eye. Combine seeing with hearing, as we do in the 'talkies,' and we have the most impressionable means of education known to pedagogy.

"Motion picture films are today the most direct and effective means of popular education. How then can the best pictures be brought to our theatre-going public? The only answer is through the reviewing of films and through constructive criticism of films already shown.

"These reviews should not be made by paid employees of the motion picture industry, but by persons sufficiently interested in the cause to give their service for the improvement of the standards. We have such persons in Alabama. They are banded together into Better Films Councils or groups.

"Several of the larger cities have well-organized groups but the crying need is for more and stronger groups. Every town of any size needs one, and this slogan, 'A Better Films Group for every town having a moving picture theatre,' might be selected as the goal to strive towards during 1934.

"Within the past three years, according to authorities, there has been a definite improvement in the grist that is ground from the Hollywood mills. This is largely attributed to the concerted action of the Better Films Groups and club women sponsoring the improvement of motion pictures. Chiefly, through the influence of these groups, the public has grown weary of the

more lurid cinema offerings of yesteryear. Mr. and Mrs. Average Theatregoer are learning to discriminate between good and bad films and no longer go to a show without having some idea of what is in store for them.

"The newspapers are playing a strong part in this. Every paper of any size today gives reviews of films which will be presented by local playhouses. Some papers have regular critics on the staff who attend the performance at preview showings and give the news-reading public a synopsis of the plot with recommendations as to the worthwhileness of the film. Other papers go a step further and publish a column weekly showing the recommendations and endorsements of Better Films Groups, with pictures classified for varying ages of the audience.

"Broadcasting reviews of pictures by educational institutions has also had its effects in promoting a higher development of the screen's educational, civic and social values. However, the commercial picture must first have an entertainment value, otherwise no one is going to see it. People do not go to a movie because they are compelled to or because it is their duty or because they hope for uplift. They go primarily for pleasure. The problem of satisfying many minds is not an easy one. An audience is capricious. They like today what they hate tomorrow, and no one knows why or when the swing in popular taste takes place.

"Perhaps it is because of these facts that the producers set up a sort of un-official 'spy system' in the theatres to keep pace with popular demand. Eavesdropping ushers, other employees of the theatres and, in some instances, 'listeners-in' as we might call them, are engaged to 'tune in' to the criticisms made by theatre-goers and report to the producers 'what they say.' Therefore, in the final analysis, the American public runs Hollywood.

"It must be borne in mind that the Better Films group works with the theatre managers, not against them, and that there is close cooperation between the two. It is Hollywood's job to produce pictures. It is the job of the theatre-goer to let his admission ticket be his ballot for higher standards of production."

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

I GOT YOUR NUMBER—Pat O'Brien, Joan Blondell and Allan Jenkins. Rough, racy comedy that develops into snappy melodrama. Adventures of a telephone mechanic and a telephone girl involved in a robbery. Good entertainment. *Mature*.

THE LAST ROUNDUP—Randolph Scott. From the novel "The Border Legion" by Zane Grey. *Paramount*. Story of the o.d. West—a band of outlaws terrorize the countryside with their lawlessness but their leader proves that there is some good even in an outlaw. The photography is excellent. *Family*.

LONG LOST FATHER—John Barrymore and Helen Chandler. From the novel by G. B. Stern. *RKO*. A light, sophisticated story of an English ne'er-do-well who meets his daughter after many years and finds it too late for parental authority. *Mature*.

***MAN OF TWO WORLDS**—Francis Lederer, Henry Stephenson and Elissa Landi. From the novel by Ainsworth Morgan. *RKO*. An unusual story, excellently produced and acted, with a logical ending. A young Eskimo serves as a guide for an Arctic expedition, falls in love with a picture of the leader's daughter and asks to be taken to London to meet her—there he finds an entirely different and highly confusing world. *Family*.

MOULIN ROUGE—Constance Bennett and Franchot Tone. *United Artists*. A familiar type of backstage story, about a girl who makes good, in which the novelty is that Constance Bennett plays two parts. The musical numbers are put on with much splendor. *Mature*.

NANA—Anna Sten, Lionel Atwill and Phillips Holmes. Suggested by Emile Zola's novel. *United Artists*. A costume picture of Paris in the 1860's, about a girl of the streets who rises to fame and fortune on the stage. The picture is only faintly suggestive of the novel but the acting of Anna Sten, the new Russian actress, is excellent. *Mature*.

***ONCE TO EVERY WOMAN**—Fay Wray and Ralph Bellamy. From a story by A. J. Cronin. *Columbia*. A smooth running and well acted picture concerning the love and duties of a young supervisor of nurses in a large city hospital. Outside of the scene in the operating room being too long and agonizing, the picture is highly entertaining. *Family*.

ORIENT EXPRESS—Heather Angel, Norman Foster and Ralph Morgan. *Fox*. Colorful melodrama of lives brought together during the adventures on the fast train from Paris to Istanbul. Considerable excitement at times and Heather Angel is charming. *Family*.

PALOOKA—Jimmy Durante, Lupe Velez and Stuart Erwin. From the newspaper comic strip by Ham Fisher. *United Artists*. An entertaining

picture especially for those who like Jimmy Durante's humor. The son of a prizefighter champion is brought up as a simple country boy until a prizefight manager discovers him and he becomes a champion only by a lucky break. *Family*.

THE POOR RICH—Edward Everett Horton and Edna May Oliver. *Universal*. An amusing comedy of two cousins who having lost their money return to their family mansion to try and recoup their fortune. Their experiences in the dilapidated house, and the people who come to work for them, make a highly entertaining film. *Family*.

***QUEEN CHRISTINA**—Greta Garbo and John Gilbert. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. An historical picture of the daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus, which tells that she gave up her throne for love. It shows the seventeenth century Swedish court with beautiful pageantry. The story has the weakness of melodrama but it is told with pictorial eloquence and dialogue of real distinction, and is illumined by the finest portrayal Garbo has yet given. Her art has broadened and deepened during her absence from the screen. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*.

REX KING OF WILD HORSES—William Janney and horses. *Columbia*. Story of the Navajo Indian reservation, in which a remarkable stallion helps his young Indian master to wipe out a band of horse thieves. The horses give unusual interest to a story that otherwise resembles serial melodrama. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.

SEARCH FOR BEAUTY—Buster Crabbe and Ida Lupino. *Paramount*. A boy and a girl, Olympic winners, run a farm for health and beauty seekers. Some very good shots of the Olympic games, and some amusing episodes. *Family*.

SIX OF A KIND—Charles Ruggles, Mary Boland, Burns and Allen, Alison Skipworth and W. C. Fields. *Paramount*. Most amusing comedy in which a couple after twenty years decide to go on a second honeymoon, in their car. They advertise for a couple to share expenses and draw Burns and Allen and the four meet up with W. C. Fields and Alison Skipworth, owners of a small hotel in the West. *Family*.

***SORRELL AND SON**—H. B. Warner. From the novel by Warwick Deeping. *United Artists*. Warwick Deeping's story of a father's devotion and how it was rewarded, produced in England with charming settings. The picture is done with splendid restraint but effectively and movingly. *Family*.

STRAIGHTAWAY—Tim McCoy and William Bakewell. *Columbia*. A vigorous story of auto speed racing, in which two brothers are rivals—in a very human way. Interesting and well done, and should be excellent entertainment for boys. *Family*.

THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN—*Lionel Barrymore, Fay Bainter and Mae Clarke. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Story of a family, quite domestic in atmosphere, in which a crisis arises to bring out all the best in the parents and the children. *Family.*

THROUGH THE CENTURIES—*Directed by Francis X. Talbot, S. J. Beacon.* A chronicle of the rise and spread of Christianity, collected from various films with much effectiveness. The latter part is an interesting record of the work of Catholic missionaries. The picture has a lot of interest and instructional value. Suggested for schools, libraries and churches, especially Catholic. *Family.*

TWO ALONE—*Jean Parker and Tom Brown. From the story "Wild Birds" by Dan Tothoroe. RKO.* A simple and homely story of two youngsters on a farm and their struggles against the tyranny of the farmer and his family. Though the outline of the plot is old the picture is done with beautiful sincerity and a touching quality that is really moving. *Family.*

WINE WOMEN AND SONG—*Lilyan Tashman and Lew Cody. Chadwick.* A back-stage story of conventional type, in which a mother melodramatically saves her daughter from a designing villain, made interesting by some good impersonations by likeable players. *Mature.*

***YOU CAN'T BUY EVERYTHING**—*May Robson, Jean Parker and William Bakewell. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* May Robson gives a vivid characterization in a Hetty Green part of an avaricious woman. Colorful picture, with many excellent entertainment qualities, though the ending may seem sentimental to many people. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

(1 reel each)

CANNIBAL ISLANDS—*Vitaphone. Family.*
***THE CITY OF WAX**—*Educational.* Life of bees. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available. *Family. Junior matinee.*
COLORFUL PORTS OF CALL (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Seychelles, Zanzibar, Mambassa. *Family.*
***HORSEPOWER** (Sportlight)—*Paramount.* Expert horsemanship. *Family. Junior matinee.*
IN SOUTH AMERICA (Laughing with John P. Medbury)—*Columbia. Family.*
IT'S SPORT IN ANY LANGUAGE (World of Sport)—*Columbia.* Sports of several countries. *Family.*
MISSISSIPPI (Tone Journey)—*Vitaphone.* Scenic with Ferde Grofe's music. *Family.*
MOORISH SPAIN (Vagabond Adventures)—*RKO. Family.*
ROAMING THE NETHERLANDS (Magic Carpet)—*Fox. Family.*

CARTOONS

(1 reel each)

THE AUTOGRAPH HUNTER (Krazy Kat)—*Columbia. Family. Junior matinee.*
CANDY HOUSE (Oswald)—*Universal. Family. Junior matinee.*
***THE CHINA SHOP** (Silly Symphony in color)—*United Artists. Family. Junior matinee.*
DAVEY JONES' LOCKER (Willie the Whopper in color)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family. Junior matinee.*
HOLLAND DAYS (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Family. Junior matinee.*

PETTIN' IN THE PARK (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone. Family.*
RED HOT MAMA (Talkartoon)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
SCRAPPY'S ART GALLERY (Scrappy)—*Columbia. Family.*
SHANGHAIED (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists. Family.*
SOCK-A-BYE BABY (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
THE THREE BEARS (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Family. Junior matinee.*

SKITS, MUSICALS, COMEDIES, SERIALS

(1 reel each unless marked otherwise)

AIR FRIGHT—*Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Family.*
AROUND THE CLOCK—Radio star's daily life. *Vitaphone, 2 rls. Family.*
THE BRIDAL BALL—*RKO, 2 rls. Family.*
BROADWAY VARIETIES—*Universal, 2 rls. Family.*
***BUBBLING OVER**—*Ethel Waters. RKO, 2 rls. Family.*
THE CLOWN DIES—*Mystery. Columbia. Family.*
THE CRACKED ICE MAN—*Charley Chase. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Family.*
HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NOS. 7-8—*Paramount. Family.*
THE INVENTORS—*Col. Stoopnagle and Budd. Educational, 2 rls. Family.*
A LITTLE GIRL WITH BIG IDEAS—*Revue. Vitaphone, 3 rls. Family.*
MANHATTAN LULLABY—*Helen Morgan. Educational. Family.*
MICKEY'S MINSTRELS—*Mickey McGuire. Columbia, 2 rls. Family. Junior matinee.*
THE MYSTERY SQUADRON (Serial)—No. 4—Men of Steel; No. 5—The Death Swoop; No. 6—Doomed; No. 7—Enemy Signals; No. 8—The Canyon of Calamity; *Bob Steele. Mascot, 2 rls. each. Family. Junior matinee.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NOS. 7-8—*Paramount. Family.*
PICTURE PALACE—*Hal LeRoy and Dawn O'Day. Vitaphone, 2 rls. Family.*
PRIVATE LESSONS—*Hal LeRoy and Dawn O'Day. Vitaphone, 2 rls. Family.*
PURE FEUD—*Ventriloquist. Vitaphone. Family. Junior matinee.*
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 2-4—*Columbia. Family.*
SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 7—*Paramount. Family.*
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 36—*Universal. Family.*
THE SUPER SNOOPER—*Andy Clyde. Educational, 2 rls. Family.*
TWIN SCREWS—Two sailors. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Family.*
WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT—*Mystery. Columbia. Family.*
THE WRONG WRONG TRAIL—*Block and Sully. Vitaphone. Family.*

(Continued from page 3)

"The motion picture," said Dr. Tippy in an address in Chicago in July before the World Conference of Faiths, "is the people's theatre. The cinema has been made possible by mass interest and mass support. It has and must continue to appeal to the intelligence and desires of the populace. The common people are wholesome. They want to see evil overcome. They want a simple story. They love the emotional drama. They delight in action, even boisterous action. They like a rough scene which is like the life they lead. They are entitled to the entertainment for which they pay so long as it is decent. If intellectual people want to see a special kind of show it is for them to encourage its production and to arouse an interest in the mass in the exceptional picture."

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 55c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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March, 1934

Twenty-fifth Anniversary
Conference
of the
National Board of Review
Addresses and Resolutions

Cinema Notes
of a
Returned Traveler



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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*AS THE EARTH TURNS—*Jean Muir and Donald Woods. From novel by Gladys Hasty Carroll. Warner.* A capable portrayal of the novel dealing with farm life in Maine. The characters seem real and the acting is excellent. The entire production is done with dignity and sincerity. Recommended to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. *Family.*

BOLERO—*George Raft and Carole Lombard. Paramount.* A young dancer unable to make a hit alone finds a girl dancing partner and with one girl after another he climbs to fame and fortune. The story is interesting and the dancing lovely. *Family.*

CAT AND THE FIDDLE—*Ramon Novarro and Jeannette MacDonald. From operetta by Kern and Harbach. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* The tuneful romance of two young composers in Brussels and Paris lavishly screened. Of a different order than recent screen musicals, done with quiet charm and an excellent all-around cast. *Family.*

*DAVID HARUM—*Will Rogers. From novel by Edward Noyes Westcott. Fox.* A pleasant, human, rambling picture of a small-town banker who combines horse trading with a sly habit of helping people out of difficulties. A warm and entertaining reproduction of rural America in the nineties, with a central part ideally suited to the star. *Family. Junior matinee.*

DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY—*Fredric March and Evelyn Venable. From play by Alberto Casella. Paramount.* A morbid but interesting story well handled. A strange guest comes to a houseparty—Death takes the form of a man to discover why man fears him—and discovers

that only great love has no fear of death. *Mature.*

DEVIL TIGER—*Kane Richmond and Marion Burns. Fox.* Hunting a man-eating tiger in Malay—much fine and interesting photography, several combats between animals, through which a love story is dragged by sheer force. *Family.*

FEROCIOUS PAL, THE—*Kazan. Principal.* Principally a dog story—a hero dog and a villain dog, and an exciting life among sheepherders. Youngsters, not minding the imperfections in structure would enjoy the plot, which is much better than in the usual picture of its kind. *Family. Junior matinee.*

GOOD DAME—*Fredric March and Sylvia Sydney. Paramount.* A tough circus gambler meets a nice girl and fights against falling in love with her but circumstances intervene. The story drags a bit but the acting is good and parts are interesting. *Mature.*

HEAT LIGHTNING—*Aline MacMahon, Preston Foster and Ann Dvorak. Warner.* An exciting night at a desert gas-filling station, in which two former lovers meet again. A melodramatic but sincere story and with good acting. *Mature.*

I BELIEVED IN YOU—*Rosemary Ames, John Bolcs and Victor Jory. Fox.* How a sincere girl, plunged into Greenwich Village life, learned the difference between the real and the fake. A new and likeable personality in the leading part, Rosemary Ames. *Family.*

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT—*Clarke Gable and Claudette Colbert. Cosmopolitan story by Samuel Hopkins Adams. Columbia.* While the newspapers, radio and the police are busy hunting for a lost heiress the cause of all the trouble is finding romance and adventure for the first time along the road from Miami Beach to New York, and for the first time in his life a star reporter finds something more thrilling than a scoop. *Family.*

JIMMY THE GENT—*James Cagney and Bette Davis. From novel "The Heir Chaser" by Laird Doyle. Warner.* Another racket story—this time finding heirs to claim fortunes which have no heirs. Cagney is excellent in the part of a real tough guy. *Mature.*

JOURNAL OF A CRIME—*Ruth Chatterton. First National.* Interesting story of a woman who having committed a crime tries to resume her normal life but fights a losing battle against her conscience. The acting of both Ruth Chatterton and Adolphe Menjou is excellent. *Mature.*

*KEEP 'EM ROLLING—*Walter Huston and Frances Dee. Story "Rodney" by Leonard Nason. RKO.* An artillery story, of a soldier and a horse—how they went through the war and
(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The National Board of Review - Its Functions Yesterday and Today

By WILTON A. BARRETT

Executive Secretary, National Board of Review

*Address delivered at the National Board's
twenty-fifth anniversary Conference, February,
1934.*

TWENTY-FIVE years ago the People's Institute banded together a small group of men and women to sponsor the medium of the motion picture to the American people, to offer protection to it from the early blight of political censorship control, and to begin to evaluate the new social meanings and the untold possibilities of this new art. The elements of reform, together with many well-meaning people, were insisting that pictures be censored. The first group of the National Board undertook a review of the films before they were released to the public and further undertook to recommend deletions where these seemed necessary. This was an expediency, and the fact should be stated that the National Board in the beginning carried on, in some measure, a censorship activity, although of an extra-legal nature. But then, the liberal viewpoint of yesterday was not the same as that of today. Those who composed the National Board, for the most part, did not believe in censorship and were very forward-looking people anxious to serve the public, anxious to encourage a new art. Whatever the extent of this censoring activity was the results were marked by the whimsicality and inconsistency in the practice.

At the root of the disturbed public's attitude was a bewilderment, the bewilderment of any people confronted with a new mode of expression, and possibly a more sinister psychological significance could be discovered if looked for—the desire of the privileged class to control amusement and ideas, very similar to the motive behind the effort to stifle the printing press, since books sent out among the masses might prove very dangerous things—the masses might become educated. The first audience of the motion picture was pretty much an audience of the common people, the effort to establish political censorship was pretty much an effort of the upper classes.

The motion picture has lived down much of that, because it is a ribbon of film on which can be placed the world and on which much of the world has been placed, in the sense that it has been photographed there. The appeal of the motion picture has been to the world, and the world has responded and become its audience. It is that great fact that must give us pause, for here we have probably the greatest and most universal form of expression that has been put at man's disposal for man's use. The main question, it seems to me, is whether the motion picture is to remain, for the most part, an entertainment, necessary and desirable as its employment as entertainment is, or whether it is to grow and become used like

literature itself for the broadening of man's knowledge, for the intellectual and emotional responses it can awaken, and as one of the tools that records the history of the race, as are the other arts. It is with awakening a perception of this great possibility in the films, and through such awakening, the bringing about of the fuller development, the fuller use, and the greater grandeur of the motion picture, that it seems to me the work of the National Board of Review must concern itself more and more as the years go on. It is a matter of public education.

But not to step ahead too fast—just a hint of some of the things that led the National Board to see that it had gotten off on the wrong foot in attempting to take things out of pictures or leave them in. The first thing that cropped up was that people as individuals did not, and could not be made to, think alike about motion pictures any more than they could about anything else. It is one of the trying and one of the most encouraging things about human nature. It would be grand if we could all reach agreement as to what to take out of motion pictures, or out of books, or out of art, or out of our lives, or out of eternity itself; it would be grander if we could all reach agreement as to what to put into them—it would solve all of our problems. But as to the motion picture, both as popular fare and as art, it would be at a standstill. It would be stale and stay stale, like a table d'hôte dinner that everybody agreed to eat day after day. But, thank heaven, the motion picture is a cafeteria, some days it is good, some days it is bad, but we can always take our tray and walk around and order what we like, and tomorrow is another day—and hope springs eternal in the human stomach, just as it springs eternal in the human breast.

At the time the National Board was established, and for some time following, what made and still makes the legal censor boards so ridiculous—the condemnation of a film in one state, the passing of the same film in another state, certain deletions in another state and certain other deletions in still another—tended to mark its work with futility. As already said, all human beings cannot be made to think alike, nor do you want them to think alike, in matters of morals,

aesthetics, or what constitutes intelligence. Having recognized this, and having thrown our large book of standards figuratively overboard, we began to see with some hope that we could act as intelligent people about the motion picture art, on a common sense basis, and help other people to do likewise. The progress of the Board started with this perception. If we had kept on as we began, we would have been out of business as a progressive social organization long ago, and deservedly so, because we would not have been progressive at all—we would have failed to recognize the value of evolution in viewpoint and practice.

Early we learned not to reach too hasty conclusions about what people said, did and thought about the films. We were forced to learn this because some of our own members were saying, doing and thinking exceedingly foolish things about motion pictures, and perfectly contrary things about them. This taught us to look at both sides of a question.

The gradual development of the Review Committee to its present size of almost four hundred trained volunteer workers could be punctuated all through by examples of perfectly cockeyed thinking about motion pictures. The organization and development of this Committee has been a lesson in human nature and in the realm of practical experience in psychology. It has helped us to reach certain convictions about some of the things that compelled, and still compel, some people to advocate censorship. We have learned that it is so much easier to say "condemn it, it is bad," than to admit "it hurt me, therefore I wish it taken away."

We have learned gradually, while admitting that there was, and still is, much that is shoddy, tawdry and vulgar in motion pictures (principally because many, many people who see motion pictures are vulgar and shoddy, and tawdry, and this condition of the mass audience will have to be corrected before much that is in popular motion pictures can be corrected), that what is often times said to be evil and a bad influence in motion pictures is not because there is anything that is particularly evil or a bad influence in a film itself but because people act to it emotionally out of their own dilemmas which the picture has touched and

disturbed. Recognizing this fact, gradually we have learned to put some faith in the decency of the public, despite its shortcomings. We have also learned that what people take to the theatre, they take out of it in terms of reaction.

All these and other matters, have been considered as influences in our effort to see both motion pictures and the individuals who compose their audience in larger terms, with human understanding and some approach to scientific appreciation of all that is involved. While neither the motion picture nor its audience is the same today as it was yesterday, the motion picture as entertainment appeals to the masses of today just as it appealed to the masses of yesterday. Those two masses, it is true, have more knowledge since the world has moved faster. They have a different viewpoint since the world has changed. But the mass audience of yesterday and the mass audience of today and the mass audience of tomorrow was, is and will be composed of human beings, and how to increase the perception in these human beings of what is worthy, imaginative, beautiful and good for their souls, as well as for their human needs for diversion, recreation and relaxation, is as much a problem of today as it was yesterday. It is the problem of all who wish to make the world a better place to live in by making better people to live with, through making people more intelligent and sensitive and more passionately intent on using the great forces of expression and communication as meaningful factors in developing their lives. Is it too Utopian to think that we can solve this problem? Is it too unrealistic, people being what they are? Shall we have to struggle too hard to use this world of the motion picture, the radio, the automobile, all very pleasant things in themselves that help to make life pleasantly automatic and help to make us slipshod, rather than have it use us?

I think there is hope, at least with regard to the motion picture, if indeed it is an enduring art as we think it is. If it is an enduring art, its best works will force themselves upon our consciousness in the way that the works of other arts have forced themselves upon our consciousness and made themselves a part of what we are. It is in finding support for the film of creative and

artistic worth that the chances lie, and in finding support for the film that can be used to broaden our education and stir that excitement which leads to education. Only the films that excite, either as entertainment, art, or instruction, are worthy of our notice.

Do not let us fear to be excited, for out of excitement, intellectual and emotional, come the great things of life. Only through those kinds of excitement are the propulsive forces found that send us along the path of progress. The National Board of Review must understand this with vividness and with pioneering courage, just as it understood it dimly and falteringly twenty-five years ago when the Board was organized.

The National Board of Review must seek the unification of all groups that sympathize with its philosophy with regard to the motion picture and must try to help such groups in furthering the understanding of that point of view. We want no censorship. We want an educated public opinion that will encourage the production of fine films, which means making them socially as well as commercially successful where they are designed for entertainment in the theatres, and making them humanly as well as instructionally successful where they are designed for use in the curriculum. The program for the field, as carried on by many of the affiliated groups of the National Board, is full and promising. I think we can safely say that no research as to how motion pictures can and should be used and how they can and should be developed can go very far beyond this program which began to be developed in 1916. The skeleton has been constructed and flesh has been added and the whole structure and substance can be elaborated by nourishment and use. Like any other organism, it will gain vitality as its muscles are made to grow. It will gain life. It is the National Board's business and the business of all who are working with the National Board, to renew faith and energy in constantly stimulating this growth of life in the motion picture. It is a miracle that can be accomplished.

One thing I think we have to face frankly now and for the future—the habit of regarding pictures and things about pictures emotionally must be overcome and we must

learn to take hold of our task very dispassionately. It is time to stop talking about "the morals of the movies" for morals change—the morals of yesterday, or rather the moral viewpoint of yesterday, for good or bad, are not the same as the morals, or moral viewpoint, of today.

Twenty-five years have created a chasm between our feeling about life yesterday and our feeling about life today, and so our feel-

ing about the films; and we must remember that the motion picture, if we have bridged that chasm, has accompanied and recorded our perilous climb across it. Let us remember, then, that we will change again and that the motion pictures will change, and let us look forward to the future in the work of bringing this great medium into adjustment to our lives and our lives into adjustment with it.

A Quarter Century of Organized Motion Picture Interest

By LEROY E. BOWMAN

Mr. Bowman, a director of the Child Study Association and a member of the National Board Executive Committee, was presiding officer at the first session of the Board's anniversary Conference and these were his introductory remarks.

LET me call your attention to the fact that today we are 25 years of age.

We not only have come to our majority but we are fully grown now, we are adults, and as adults I think we have the right to express our opinions of ourselves and say in brief what our philosophy is.

I would like to say that the point of view, the philosophy as it were, of the National Board of Review is in a phrase that of democratic common sense. And I would like to show you that there are two distinguishing features of democratic common sense. The one of them is involved in the first word, namely "democratic" which implies that we of the National Board and our friends feel that motion pictures are an instrument for the benefit of all people and that therefore those motion pictures which are to be seen by the vast mass of people must be of a kind that will be pleasing to the vast mass of people. For that reason there is raised in the minds of some of us the question of whether we can get universal perfection in any short period of time. We wonder if there isn't such a thing for motion pictures, as, let's say, the popular fiction level of intelligence and we wonder if that isn't quite the general level. And so involved in our

first distinguishing feature of democratic common sense is this further question—is it not wise to have different kinds of pictures and to build up for special types of pictures audiences that will make them profitable? In other words the whole question of democracy raises also the question of selection.

The second feature, however, of this question of democratic common sense is this, that it takes time to arrive at a conclusion about a matter which may be somewhat new to us and it also takes a mulling around to arrive at a common sense decision; that is, it requires a lot of talking with and an understanding of people whose points of view are different from our own. And hence it is that the National Board has felt that the emphasis ought to be put on good pictures, but that we ought not to fall into the fallacies that I think some people, good people with excellent intentions, have fallen into once in a while. Might I list what seem to me three of these fallacies? They are fallacies that I do not believe the Board has in its 25 years of existence subscribed to, nor do I think that it will subscribe to them in the next 25 years of its existence. The three fallacies that I would list are these:

First, the fallacy that the motion picture industry can of itself raise itself, as it were by its own bootstraps. It seems to me that it is utterly impossible that an industry as

an agency should be an educational force by and of itself. It seems to me that it is utterly impossible for any industry as such even to be a leader of social pressures and it is only as pressures are brought to bear on the making of films that we are ever going to get anything that comes up in any measure to social ideals.

Second, there is a fallacy that some people fall into (I am sure no member of the National Board would agree to it) namely, that there is a semblance of social force brought to bear on motion pictures in what is called censorship. That is, that when there is the form of official pressure brought to bear on films there is something of social pressure. Might I suggest, however, that social pressure comes only, in any adequate sense at all, when the object of pressure is in the limelight and under the scrutiny that comes with the attention of publicity? And may I say that so far as I have been able to see censorship there has been an effort, and in the case of New York State according to the rather excellent booklet, "What Shocked the Censors," quite a decided effort, to isolate the censors from the force of public pressure. There was brought to bear, therefore, on the movies which are influenced by that censorship, not the pressure of public opinion but only that rather limited, may I say very often unintelligent, pressure that is brought by a politician's body on political appointees.

There is a third fallacy that some of you may not agree to but that I would like to list. And in saying some of these things you will quite realize, I am sure, that I am trying to present to you some things that you may disagree with and to make your thinking and your discussion later more interesting. The third fallacy consists in the resolution type of verbalizing that certain like-minded people gathered together in organizations sometimes call civic work, where without any too great effort or time spent upon it people judge movies according to a moralistic standard that is very easy to come by. The thing that I am apt to criticize very severely is the effort of people who are so willing to express themselves, without having taken great pains to study the subject and to see it from all angles and without being willing to devote considerable time and energy to

the program that they themselves adopt. It seems perfectly obvious to some of us who have watched this sort of thing in various cities for some time past that it is going to take the concerted efforts of all of us over quite a number of years before we are going to get out of the movies anything like what we want. And so I would like to urge a great deal of very industrious effort on the part of anybody who wants to take a part in this work.

I would like to say then, that we feel after the experience that lies behind us now, that our general policy has been quite validated by everything that we have seen. And four things I want to remind you of. Perhaps no meeting of ours ought to begin without some reference to them:

1. Our feeling that emphasis should be placed on the good films, and that we can get toward better films by seeing to it that the good films are patronized. And in this connection the use in newspapers of the Photoplay Guide to Selected Pictures, as based on the review work of the National Board, is very important.

2. The experience that many of us watch in various cities where special films for children have been presented for years past in a very successful fashion. This is something that does work when it is properly organized and sufficiently supported. It is part of our philosophy, I take it, that if the general run of films does not fit the needs of children it is one of our chief purposes to see that we have films that do.

3. We feel that there is much still to be achieved in the way of building a better vision of what films may be. I am inclined to believe, myself, that there is a great deal of ability in the American people. There is a great deal of aesthetic capacity in them. But I think we are very much limited by the patterns to which we have become accustomed. As a matter of fact I doubt if psychologically it is possible to get ahead very far if all we have in stimulation and example and pattern presented to us is one type. So it would seem that one of the most essential ways of getting at this whole problem is that of educating the public by showing to the leaders of the community those exceptional films, those dramatic and educational examples of the cinema which

can enlarge the vision and show what can be done with the medium as a creative force. It is only as we know and appreciate what can be done that we will come to demand.

4. It seems to me as a person interested in the education of children particularly that the greatest hope lies in the encouragement of films for purposes of visual education. It would seem that there will come into the production of films new ideas, new attitudes, the patterns of presenting facts as they are,

a world as it appears to us, if we can have an educator's point of view worked into the films. And as children grow up seeing films that show reality, they will look at them as pictures of what is rather than merely as a passing show, something ephemeral that one is to be amused by for a few minutes and forget. It seems to me that as this point of view is bred into children we are going to build a populace that is critical and demanding. So I say that we look forward with a great deal of hope and we feel that our 25th year opens with great promise.

The Conference Summary

By FRANCIS D. TYSON

Dr. Tyson, Professor of Economics, University of Pittsburgh, is a member of the Better Films National Council of the Board and served on the Conference Resolutions Committee.

Life is a flux; times and standards change in fashions, ideas and movies. That is why it is such a fine thing really to know an organization like the National Board of Review—which, though its methods and tools have altered with the passing years, has remained basically true to its original purpose of enlightening and ennobling the use of this alluring technical tool, the motion picture.

There has often been discouragement. Too few have perceived clearly the vital issues and been willing to work. However, this fine group in New York, with whom I have been in touch for twenty years, has held courageously to an intelligent and sound position, and gradually, despite inadequacy of finances, has been gaining support and understanding throughout the country.

Mr. Wilton A. Barrett, the Executive Secretary, has himself been with the Board for 20 years—in executive command since 1923. You have learned to know and to love him for his intellectual and aesthetic appreciation, vision, courage, generosity, and capacity for friendship.

Now the National Board is coming into its own. The moving picture, with sound,

has been growing up and the improvement in the quality of some of its product places an immediate responsibility on the Board for helping more actively to organize the mature audience.

The New Deal and program for controlled cooperation is here to stay; at least change is the order of the day; the old cake of custom is broken; the forces of reaction are in retreat, or at least on the defensive, for the first time in many years. Constructive developments may come rapidly.

Under the NRA code the industry will have the aid of the President and the Administration in setting its house in order, and in achieving a more unified and intelligent leadership than it has had in the past. The need for public relations directors or buffers, or for devious indirection and pious pap is over, fortunately, for the business and for the nation, as self-government and cooperation under the code develop; the cards will be on the table and he who runs may read what Al Smith pertinently calls "the record." Many will read it.

To do the best work of production the more intelligent motion picture directors and policy makers of the industry need our help. The time has come to free them from the twisted leading strings of state censorship.

We are glad to aid in the movement. We

have passed resolutions for a quarter century pointing out that censorship is negative, unscientific, indiscriminate, designed to defeat the public interest, and tending to harass and thwart the development of motion pictures as art, instruction, or entertainment, and generally to trammel our efforts to increase the social usefulness of the medium. A free screen, like the free press, must be assured. So we welcome the New York organized effort and endorse the measure about to be introduced at Albany to suspend the censorship body, known as the Motion Picture Division of the New York State Education Department.

The constructive clause of the repeal measure which continues contribution to the revenues of the State as license fees, will effectively answer any reasoned opposition arising from considerations of economy. Indeed, in the present emergency with its vast real needs, any unnecessary, inefficient and costly pseudo-public service, like censorship, should be abandoned, for economic as well as social reasons.

In Pennsylvania, I believe we will follow suit. Political reorganization, begun drastically in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh last November under the New Deal, is likely to sweep the State at the next election. Republicans and Democrats alike will compete for forward-looking votes. The movement to repeal censorship and remove the expensive State Board whose activities, study will no doubt show, are as negative and foolish, or more so, than in New York, has a good chance of success. It is already being discussed by the women's and progressive organizations. The effort will move into the field of practical politics at once.

In summing up this Conference, it is hardly necessary for me to do more than agree with you that the program this year has been a helpful one; the papers and talks marked, in my opinion, the highest level of our interpretations of the motion picture in the history of the National Board's work.

Fortunately these papers will be published in the National Board of Review Magazine, and will be available for reading and study.

May I add a word of praise for all of you here who have borne the heavy burdens in the heat of the day and who are at last to have more aid and appreciation and pos-

sibly even power and prestige in the arduous effort to insure the silver screen, by which we have been thrilled perhaps more often than we have been bored, from such stupidity, shoddiness and venality as have harmed it.

Resolutions Adopted at the Annual Conference of the National Board of Review

On Motion Picture Research

RESOLVED, that this Conference express its interest in all research effort that tends to define the attitudes and evaluate the reactions of audiences, both young and old, to the motion picture; but that this Conference believes that it is as yet scientifically, as well as humanly, exceedingly difficult to distinguish and separate the influences of the motion picture from all of the other factors that act as influences in conditioning the life of the individual, whether such individual be young or old; and that this Conference express itself, therefore, as favoring the discriminating examination of all researches purporting to be scientific, or otherwise, from a viewpoint of critical intelligence, dispassionate rather than emotional, and strongly urges the public in general, particularly parents and those sympathetic to the needs and welfare of children and young people, not to indulge in loose thinking about motion pictures and their alleged effects, but rather to weigh all evidence carefully and suspend final judgment until such time as fuller testimony is made a matter of record.

On the Extension of the Board's Work

RESOLVED, that this Conference record its approval of all work being done to develop the appreciation of the motion picture as a medium of art, entertainment and instruction on the part of both young and old; and

(Continued on page 14)

"A Writer's Viewpoint on the Motion Picture"

By GRETTA PALMER

This talk was given by Miss Palmer, Editor, Women's Page, New York World-Telegram, at the National Board Conference.

YOU remember, perhaps, an interest that swept the country last year which was technocracy. At that time we heard a great deal about technological unemployment which was applied mostly to industries. Well I think there has been a good deal of technological unemployment in the home, especially technological unemployment for mothers as compared with the mothers of preceding generations. For instance, our grandmothers and great grandmothers had really so much to do with their housekeeping, their baking and their making of candles—with all of those duties that the scientists have relieved us of—that they didn't have much time to worry about how their children were growing up. They also had more children and so they weren't permitted to devote the search-light of their entire interest on the intelligence of two or three small children. Well now-a-days mothers have more leisure to consider the influences that are affecting their children. They also have studied psychology and have, I am afraid, taken alarm by discovering from the psychiatrists all the dreadful mistakes that they might make about which their grandmothers were lucky enough to know nothing.

This has inclined to make parents today a little bit panicky. It has given them a certain timidity about the influences which might be wrecking their children's lives. I believe that human nature is a good deal more robust than many mothers give it credit for. But it is none the less alarming to them to feel that after all some little mistake they may make in subjecting their child to a certain book or moving picture today may warp his life when he is thirty-five. I believe that a great deal of the alarmist attitude toward the motion pictures that has come up in the last year or two may be traced to this parental panic and that it is on the whole quite unjustified. The psychiatrists are pretty well agreed now that a child's life pattern for good or evil

is fairly well determined by the time that he is five or six years old. Some even put it earlier. If it is an unfortunate life pattern it can be corrected later but if it is a fortunate one and if the child has chosen a normal, wholesome goal, then you may trust him pretty well to go round the world without your guidance and to pick up from the things that he contacts only that material which is going to feed him in the way he ought to be fed. In other words, you can take him to a moving picture, no matter how bad a one, and trust him to absorb from that picture nothing that is at variance with the life pattern that he has already selected for himself. Therefore I think that the idea of protecting the young is largely a mistake; that the parents' attitude should be rather of arming the child so that when he goes out in the world he can courageously face any influence no matter how bad without being damaged by the contact.

After all, parents who attempt to shelter their children may get away with it for a very little while, but you can't live your child's life for him and you cannot keep him between cushions for his whole life. Some day he is going to have to run up against destructive influences if not in the moving picture, then in books or in human contacts or in some way. This question of the destructive influences of literature, offers a rather interesting parallel to the alarmist attitude of the day toward moving pictures in some circles. I believe that most men here when they were seven or eight years old either with their parents' consent or without it read the Deadeye Dick stories and the most lurid and bloodthirsty volumes which they could possibly get hold of, volumes which no well-thinking librarians would ever have allowed to get into their hands, and I suppose that for a while their thoughts were filled with the most lurid and completely unsocial points of view. They glorified the gunman and they thought that Jesse James was just the kind of man they would like to be when they grew up. But I think they recovered from it; that eventually they righted themselves and pass-

ed through that phase. In the same way the boy of today who goes to see a gunman picture may get the idea that a gangster is a pretty fine fellow to be and his sister may look upon the siren as her ideal. While children are passing through these phases they may be very trying to have around the house. But on the other hand, children are trying when they are teething too, and would be extremely trying if they went on teething for fifty years. But I think you can trust them to recover their equilibrium and to get rid of these extremely trying points of view when they have passed through that period of adolescence, with which these are always associated and seem to have been long before the movies were a primary influence in adolescent life.

I said that you take out of the moving picture or out of any other cultural unit whatever you are prepared to take, but of

course you can't take it unless it is there. And so that brings me to the other phase of the subject. While I think it is quite safe to forget about censorship and to expose your children to any pictures or any play or any book that they may get their hands on, on the other hand it is obviously desirable that they should have a chance to reach the best in every field so that they may draw from that the best food for whatever life pattern they have selected. But I think that the most important thing to say to parents today is not to tell them necessarily to have faith in the moving picture. Work toward making the moving picture better, of course, but even if they have no faith at all in the moving picture to have faith in their own children to take from the picture those things which they are prepared to receive and which will make them grow up into well-rounded and healthy normal human beings.

Cinema Notes of a Returned Traveler

MRS. E. H. CAHILL

Mrs. Cahill is Motion Picture Chairman of the National Federation of Music Clubs and a member of the Better Films National Council of the National Board of Review.

DURING a recent visit abroad, it was my privilege to meet many of the leaders in the motion picture field, both on the Continent and in Great Britain. I was met with unfailing courtesy and I found a deep interest in the social and educational use of films, not only for young people of school age but also in the field of adult educational and cultural groups.

This attitude toward educational films is particularly strong in Great Britain where Film Societies are springing up everywhere to sponsor or support showings of unusual films.

Many of the large theatres are controlled by the American film industry and one sees the regular feature films there as here, good, bad and indifferent. The usual plan of feature, short and news reel is used and good features are popularly received while poor pictures are audibly criticised.

But throughout Britain are also theatres definitely devoted to the showing of unusual shorts produced in France, Germany, Russia, and Italy, as well as those of British production and a few films of this character from our own country.

The Tatler theatre of London, devoted to unusual films, has built up a fine following and a discriminating audience that makes its likes and dislikes known quickly. Mr. Broom, the genial manager, gives a keen ear to audience requests and never shows a film that either he or his able assistant has not viewed. In this house a picture is seldom considered by itself but in a program series, and this gives one a feeling quite different from the inevitable feature, short and news reel.

Many News Theatres exist in London and Paris especially, and these theatres interperse news of the day with unusual shorts and travel pictures with commentators.

In some of the special theatres devoted to short subjects and unusual films, a film magazine is shown weekly, a specially writ-

ten feature similar to a page in a home magazine. Women like it.

The criticism I heard most frequently about the news service was the lack of imagination and thought given to the distribution of such news reels. A more intelligent use of the news reel has already been started in London through the cooperation of several leading newspapers and a British film company. There is to be a supervising editor, star commentators from time to time as on the radio, and localization of news, also headlines as in newspapers.

Just as the newspapers pay huge sums for special articles on special subjects so will this sound newspaper engage the biggest names to comment on the news of the world. Here is another group alert to the new world we live in.

The industrial or "documentary" films, as the British call them, are particularly well done in Europe and so interesting and free from obtrusive advertising are they that frequently the news theatres ask to have them on their regular programs. Some of these that treat of Australian and South African industries I have gone to see twice and only at the second showing did I discover that it was an industrial film. We can learn much on this subject and our country has many fascinating fields around which to weave a story.

I might say here that I came home with one great grievance against whoever is responsible for sending to all the countries that I have visited, the crudest shorts and comedies, pictures that make one glad the theatre is dark when they are shown so that the audience may not know one is an American. Many of the shorts that are well photographed and fair in content are ruined for Europeans by the crude, uneducated, uncultured commentators. This is a tragedy and in every country I visited I was asked why we permitted this to be done—this misrepresentation of American life.

We Americans should demand just as much care in the selection of these commentators for educational and cultural background, especially their speaking and voice and diction, as is used in the radio world. It is simply out of the question for such people not to carry the impression to all the world that we are a nation of rough

and ready ruffians, knowing and caring nothing for our own language.

In Britain, the commentator, is not only required to be an authority in his own line but voice, culture and speech are all considered and so some simple British shorts go over better than some of our more costly films.

I have come to the conclusion that different types of motion picture theatres are badly needed just as different types of newspapers and magazines are both needed and provided. This is so evident to any traveler that I cannot understand why the wise men of the industry do not begin to put their house in order instead of stopping to defend methods that grew up like weeds in the old days of a buying public. It is my belief that such an indiscriminating public will never make its appearance again in our day.

Teaching films or what we would call educational films are exceedingly well done in Europe, the greatest attention being given to detail. They have something of the character of our films made by the Museum of Natural History, but they have a much wider distribution, going to schools, colleges and cinemas alike. They are made so interesting they seem to appeal to all types of audiences.

Notable work is being done by the British Commission on Educational and Cultural Films which is a link between producer and educator. This commission was active in the work of the League of Nations convention for international free trade in educational films. It works closely with the Institute for Adult Education, a field that should be a fertile one in this country in our new era of abundant leisure. Perhaps the National Board of Review could lead the way here through cooperation with our American Association for Adult Education, an organization interested in intelligent recreation and holding the idea that youth is not the only time for study, attainment or self-expression.

In France three government departments help with the distribution of educational films which are issued to schools not only free of charge but free of transport and postal charges. Under certain conditions the Ministry of Education grants one-third

of the cost of projectors purchased by the schools. The Film Institute of Italy is supported by all government departments. The law of Italy insists that films of an educational character be shown on ordinary programs.

Throughout Europe, the audiences seem to me to be more articulate, expressing their approval or disapproval by cheers or boos, while we seldom hear any demonstration in this country. For instance, I have seen a London audience sit quietly until a picture was about half over but finally losing patience, begin to boo the characters. I was told that such films were removed from the program at once. A similar attitude is shown by a French audience, especially at the news theatres where current events of the world are exhibited.

This seemed to me excellent technique for, as ordinarily in this country far too few ever make protest when I believe the producers would like an expression of opinion. But an inarticulate audience year after year leads the makers of films to believe the film public is satisfied. After all, film producers can only guess at the tastes of the inarticulate audience.

An articulate audience can get better stories, better speech, better music, less crudity in actor and director and more intelligence rather than more money spent on productions. It can be done, but not by grumbling privately and doing nothing to help the film makers know what we like and do not like.

I was told that the public in Czechoslovakia helped greatly in developing the sound picture there, for at first the audiences laughed heartily all through the most dramatic scenes.

Today, the film still appeals to the eye and it must certainly be made to appeal to the ear in a manner which so far it has not done. Perhaps some day, rhetoric and poetry will be rediscovered and the emotional quality of great music will take its rightful place on the screen and programs will not be hit or miss.

The sponsors of the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts who are accustomed to feeling the pulse of the public say: "There has been a noticeable trend toward cultural and educational programs during recent months to which the radio public has been exception-

ally receptive." Are the motion picture makers as alert or as clever as the leaders in their sister industry—the radio?

Undoubtedly the most popular motion pictures throughout the world today are Mickey Mouse and the Silly Symphonies. Many of the English theatres devoted to shorts keep constantly one of these pictures on their bill and it is always featured outside.

"Walt Disney should be voted a world benefactor" is the comment of all film-goers abroad. Here is one man who has hurdled the language barrier, building on great music a universal language.

Annual Catalog of Selected Pictures and Other Lists

THE Nineteenth Annual Selected Pictures Catalog containing the pictures selected by the Review Committees of the National Board for the year 1933, has recently been printed. It will prove valuable to all those interested in program building for special showings, as well as those discriminating theatre-goers who are interested in supporting the most worth while pictures. The audience classification of all films is given, being suitable for the mature, family or junior audience. A list of Educational Films has also recently been compiled. This list is not exhaustive but it does give suggested examples under the separate headings of Art, Citizenship, Educational Psychology, Geography, Hygiene, Social Science, Literature, Music, Nature Study, Vocational Guidance, etc., of what is available in this wide field. Other lists available are: Junior Matinee Films, Foreign Films, Exceptional Photoplays, Selected Book-Films, and Films on Subjects of Timely Interest. All of these lists, including the Educational Film List, are obtainable for 10 cents and the Catalog for 25 cents from the National Board of Review, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Resolutions

(Continued from page 9)

THAT it favor the further consideration of the motion picture in the field of adult education; and the rapid extension of such use of the films; and

THAT it favor the organized review with free discussion of films by children and young people, in the manner generally introduced and carried on by the Young Reviewers Club of the National Board of Review; and

THAT community groups working with the National Board of Review seek to incorporate such work of appreciation in their community programs so that this activity may be extended, coordinated and guided; and

THAT this Conference reaffirm its faith in the field work program as understood, applied, and participated in, by the community groups functioning in conjunction and affiliated with, and under, the leadership of the National Board of Review.

On Censorship

RESOLVED, that legal censorship, be it state or federal, is unnecessary, unscientific and opposed to the best interests of the public, inasmuch as it tends to harass, handicap, and to be destructive to the development of motion pictures as an entertainment, art and instruction, and generally to thwart the movement to increase the social usefulness of the medium of the motion picture as a whole; and

THAT, it is the opinion of this Conference that only by the education of public opinion through organized effort can the community's appreciation of the best the screen has to offer be enlarged and maintained, and that such gradual raising of the public taste is not promoted by legal censorship that relies for its existence upon keeping the public ignorant or careless of its operations, and therefore seriously interferes with this development of public opinion regarding the films; and

THAT this Conference believes that the fullest development of the free screen depends fundamentally upon the producers of pictures being left free to manufacture and create pictures, and that this self-government will best stimulate the production of films

to meet the changed audience demands arising from an increasingly educated public opinion; and

THAT this Conference, therefore, reaffirm all past resolutions of earlier Conferences opposing legal censorship, federal and state, and favor and support the organized effort to repeal censorship in those states where it is at present exercised by state authority, and that it endorse the present measure introduced into the Legislature of the State of New York to abolish the censorship body known as the Motion Picture Division of the New York State Education Department, and instruct the secretary of this Conference to send copies of this resolution to all members of the Legislature of the State of New York.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

what happened afterwards. Excellent pictures of army life at Fort Meyer, and a moving story of loyalty, with a remarkable horse. *Family. Junior matinee.*

LOST PATROL, THE—Victor McLaglen, Wallace Ford and Reginald Denny. Story "Patrol" by Philip McDonald. RKO. Story of a patrol surrounded by unseen enemies in the Mesopotamia Desert. A moving drama of simple heroes with Victor McLaglen in one of his best parts. No women in the cast. *Family.*

MANDALAY—Kay Francis and Ricardo Cortez. *First National.* Interesting and well acted picture in which a girl escaping from her evil surroundings in Rangoon, falls in love with a young doctor on the river boat to Mandalay and finds a way to happiness. *Mature.*

MYSTERY OF MR. X, THE—Robert Montgomery, Elizabeth Allen and Lewis Stone. Story "The Mystery of the Dead Police" by Philip McDonald. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The results of an amiable crook's getting accidentally involved in a murder mystery. Likeable characters and melodrama full of suspense. *Family.*

NINTH GUEST—Donald Cook and Genevieve Tobin. Play by Owen Davis. Columbia. An unusual mystery story—eight guests are invited to a party by an unknown host to meet the ninth guest who is death. The way the guests are killed and the reasons for the party make an interesting although improbable story. *Mature.*

NO MORE WOMEN—Edmund Lowe and Victor McLaglen. Paramount. Sea story with the two stars as rivals for the love of the new

and charming owner of the Pelican, a salvage ship. The picture holds the interest and the shots under the water are very interesting. *Family.*

QUITTER, THE—*Emma Dunn and William Bakewell. Chesterfield.* The story of a father who returns to his family after his two sons have grown up. Human and interesting, with an excellent cast. *Family.*

SPITFIRE—*Katharine Hepburn, Ralph Bellamy and Robert Young. Play "Trigger" by Lula Vollmer. RKO.* Interesting play of the Southern mountains, where a Joan of Arc sort of girl runs up against the mountaineers' belief in witches. Different, with a different characterization by the star. *Family.*

SUCCESS STORY—*Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Colleen Moore, Genevieve Tobin, and Frank Morgan. Play by John Howard. RKO.* Though the story points the familiar moral of the vanity of power and wealth the persons involved have more than the usual depth of character and individuality, and the dialogue is noticeably superior. The cast and direction good. *Mature.*

WONDER BAR, THE—*Al Jolson, Dolores Del Rio and Ricardo Cortez. Musical play by Frakas and Herczeg. First National.* During an evening at a Paris cabaret several people's love affairs get adjusted—the whole plot overshadowed by Al Jolson and magnificently staged musical numbers. *Mature.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

(1 reel each)

- *FLYING BODIES (Sportlight)—*Paramount.* Pole vaulting, skiing, etc. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- HOLY LAND, THE (Yagabond Adventures)—*RKO. Family.*
- ITALY—THE LAND OF INSPIRATION (Fitzpatrick Travel-talk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Rome and Florence. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- MARCH OF THE YEARS NO. 5—*Columbia.* Composing of "America"; fire-fighting in 1919 and 1934; etc. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 8—*Paramount.* Sponge gathering in old Nassau; etc. *Family.*
- FATHE REVIEW NO. 3—*RKO.* How radio performers work behind the mike; etc. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- ROPING WILD BEARS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family.*
- SPANISH AMERICA—*Vitaphone.* Havana scenes. *Family.*
- *UNDER MOROCCAN SKIES (Magic Carpet)—*Fox.* Spanish Morocco. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- VITAL VICTUALS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* How to make biscuits and cook roast beef—in color. *Family.*

CARTOONS

(1 reel each)

- *CAMPING OUT (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists. Family. Junior matinee.*
- GOODE KNIGHTS (Cubby Bear)—*RKO.* Version of Robin Hood. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- *GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists.* The old fable in color. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- HA, HA, HA! (Talkartoon)—*Paramount.* Betty Boop. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- HONEYMOON HOTEL (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone. Family. Junior matinee.*

LAST STRAW, THE (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Family.*
 OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT, THE (Terrytoon)—*Educational.* Based on Edward Lear's popular poem. *Family.*
 RIP VAN WINKLE (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Family.*
 TOY SHOPPE, THE (Oswald)—*Universal. Family. Junior matinee.*

SKITS, MUSICALS, SERIALS, COMEDIES

(1 reel each unless marked otherwise)

- BROADWAY KNIGHTS—*Paramount.* Songs by the Yacht Club Boys. *Family.*
- CABINET MEETING, A—*Vitaphone.* Radio comedy. *Mature.*
- COME TO DINNER—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Satire on *Dinner at Eight.* *Family.*
- *DERBY DECADE, THE—*RKO, 2 rls.* The old Bowery with Ruth Etting singing many old favorites. *Family.*
- DOCTOR, THE—*Educational.* Song act built around the famous painting with Helen Morgan singing. *Family.*
- EXPECTANT FATHER, THE—*Educational, 2 rls.* Ernest Truex as a young husband. *Family.*
- FOUR PARTS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Novel farce-comedy. *Family.*
- GOOFY MOVIES NO. 2—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Burlesque newsreel and melodrama. *Family.*
- GOOFTONE NEWS NO. 6—*Universal.* Take-off on newsreels. *Family.*
- "HI NEIGHBOR"—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Our Gang makes a fire-engine. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 9—*Paramount. Family.*
- I SCREAM—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Satire on gangster story. *Family.*
- ISHAM JONES—*Vitaphone.* Jones' orchestra plays at Toyland Club. *Family. Junior matinee.*
- ISN'T THAT AWFUL—*Vitaphone.* Husband breaks wife of constantly changing radio stations. *Family.*
- JUST CONCENTRATE—*Vitaphone. Family.*
- *LOVE ON A LADDER—*RKO, 2 rls.* Edgar Kennedy tries to renew his romantic youth. *Family.*
- MANAGED MONEY—*Educational, 2 rls.* One of the Frolics of Youth series, featuring Junior Coghlan and Shirley Temple. *Family.*
- MOROCCO NIGHTS—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Musical comedy done in color. *Family.*
- MYSTERY SQUADRON, THE (serial)—No. 9—The Secret of the Mine; No. 10—Clipped Wings; No. 11—The Beast at Bay; No. 12—The Ace of Aces. *Mascot, 2 rls. each. Family. Junior matinee.*
- OLIVER THE EIGHTH—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 3 rls.* Laurel and Hardy. *Family.*
- SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 4-5—*Columbia. Family.*
- SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 8—*Paramount.* Flying in 1910; old films; etc. *Family.*
- SOUP AND FISH—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Patsy Kelly and Thelma Todd. *Family.*
- STOLEN MELODY, THE—*Vitaphone.* Sigmund Spaeth, the tune detective. *Family.*
- STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 37—*Universal.* Training dogs for the blind, etc. *Family.*
- TORCH TANGO, THE—*RKO, 2 rls.* Ruth Etting in a South American broadcast. *Family.*
- TRAV'LING THE ROAD—*Educational.* Song number with Alexander Gray singing title song and "Casey Jones." *Family.*

THE National Board of Review, under the auspices of the Membership Committee, will hold its Annual Bridge Party on Saturday afternoon, May 5th at the Hotel Pennsylvania. Tickets will be \$1.25 each. Further announcement in the April magazine.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function; together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 55c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Brian Aherne and Victoria Hopper in "The Constant Nymph" (page 14)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BEYOND BENGAL—*Showmen*. An interesting picture of the adventures of Harry Schenck and Miss Baldwin, an English scientist, hunting big game with cameras. Although it was not a hunt to kill, a great many killings had to take place in self-defense. Some thrilling moments. *Family. Junior matinee.*

***BOTTOMS UP**—*Spencer Tracy, John Boles and Pat Patterson. Fox*. An entertaining and amusing story of a young girl who breaks into the movies by pretending to be the daughter of a wealthy British nobleman. Well acted with plenty of excellent music and comedy. *Family.*

COME ON MARINES—*Richard Arlen and Ida Lupino. Paramount*. Story of the fighting marines who are sent to rescue some beautiful damsels and catch an outlaw. Mildly amusing. *Family.*

CONSTANT NYMPH, THE (British production)—*Brian Aherne and Victoria Hopper. From novel by Margaret Kennedy. Fox*. The picturization of the novel about an artist's family, faithfully followed. The excellent photography and acting and the naturalness of the outdoor settings make this picture considerably above the average in artistic qualities. *Mature.*

COUNTESS OF MONTE CRISTO, THE—*Fay Wray and Paul Lukas. Universal*. Amusing story about two motion picture "extra" girls who unable to make good run away to find adventure and in doing so prove their ability to act. *Family.*

CRIME DOCTOR, THE—*Otto Kruger, Karen Morley and Nils Asther. From story "The Big*

Bow Mystery" by Israel Zangwill. RKO. Excellent actors give interest to a surprise mystery story. *Mature.*

FIGHTING RANGER, THE—*Buck Jones. Columbia*. Good Western with plenty of action in which the hero, a border ranger, poses as an outlaw to "get his man." *Family. Junior matinee.*

GAMBLING LADY—*Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea and Pat O'Brien. Warner*. The career of an honest gambler's daughter, herself an honest and very lucky gambler—how she married a rich young man and came up against a rival society girl. Dramatically interesting with some likeable characters. *Mature.*

GLAMOUR—*Constance Cummings and Paul Lukas. From story by Edna Ferber. Universal*. Story of a girl who having climbed to fame and fortune, seeks the glamour of a romantic love. *Mature.*

HAROLD TEEN—*Hal LeRoy and Patricia Ellis. From comic strip by Carl Ed. Warner*. Entertaining and very lively little story of school life in a small town. A city society girl comes to town to coach the school theatricals and she causes plenty of excitement. *Family.*

HONOR OF THE RANGE—*Ken Maynard. Universal*. Story of the West in which the star plays the dual role of the sheriff and his weak brother who betrays him. *Family.*

***HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD, THE**—*George Arliss. United Artists*. Story of the rise of the famous Jewish family and how they financed the Napoleonic wars. Handsome in setting and costumes, reminiscent of *Disraeli*, it is George Arliss' best motion picture, in which he has a role well suited to his style. Helen Westley quite rivals the star. *Family.*

LAZY RIVER—*Robert Young and Jean Parker. From play "Ruby" by Lea David Freeman. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. Three ex-crooks, accidentally and unintentionally started on the road to the right, keep on in that direction. Romance and melodrama in the bayou country of Louisiana, enlivened by the rough humor of Ted Healy and Nat Pendleton. *Family.*

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE—*Spencer Tracy and Jack Oakie. United Artists*. The melodramatic adventures of two telephone repairers who get involved in romance, robbery and murder. The two stars have likeable and characteristic parts. *Mature.*

MELODY IN SPRING—*Lanny Ross, Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles and Ann Sothern. Paramount*. Amusing and highly entertaining story—how a persistent young man wins the girl he loves against heavy odds. The cast is excellent and the singing of Lanny Ross is very good. *Family.*

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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A New General Committee Member

THE National Board of Review is pleased to announce the election of Mrs. James F. Looram to its General Committee.

In wishing to introduce her to our readers we asked Mrs. Looram to give us some information regarding herself and her special interest in motion pictures and the following is Mrs. Looram's reply supplying the background of her active interest.

"My interest in motion pictures is the very natural interest of a mother with two growing children. Almost as soon as they were old enough to develop opinions of their own I discovered that motion pictures were their most popular diversion. Like the majority of mothers, I was not willing to turn them loose to select freely any picture which, because of its intriguing advertising or striking theme, made an appeal to an active young mind. I wanted to be sure the pictures my children saw would turn their thoughts in the right, instead of the wrong,

direction.

"The activities of the Motion Picture Bureau of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae gave me the opportunity of seeing the pictures for myself before they were exhibited in the theatres and thus



Mrs. James F. Looram

exercising discrimination in the selection of the films my children should see. By interesting myself in pictures for my children's sake I discovered not only that pictures are a fascinating diversion but that it is just as important to safeguard adults in their selection of motion picture entertainment as it is merely to make sure that children see the right films. And so an entertaining pastime, the previewing of motion pictures and the effort to see that a selected list of films which are safe

for adults and young people alike is recommended to motion picture goers throughout the country, has become one of my primary interests and obligations.

"I am entirely in sympathy with the theory that improving the grade of motion pictures

is dependent upon developing fine standards of public taste. In my opinion, every ticket for a really fine film, purchased at the box-office, is a definite ballot for better motion pictures."

Mrs. Looram is a graduate of St. Joseph's Academy, Brentwood, and also attended Barnard College. While serving as President of the Brentwood Alumnae, 1924-1926, she became a member of the Executive Board of Brooklyn Circle. In 1926 she joined the Motion Picture Committee of the International Federation of Catholic Alum-

nae and served as State Chairman for Motion Pictures from 1928 through 1933 and also served as Motion Picture Chairman for Brooklyn Circle, 1928 through 1933. She has been broadcasting over station WLWL, New York City, irregularly since 1928, and since May 1933 has written a weekly talk which is broadcast over 25 stations throughout the United States. For the past five years she has served as Assistant Chairman of the Motion Picture Bureau of the I.F.C.A., and has recently been appointed Chairman of the same Bureau.

Applied Censorship

By ELMER RICE

Mr. Rice as an author and playwright has interested himself in censorship and the following article is his presentation of the subject at the Annual Luncheon of the National Board which was held in conjunction with the Conference in February. The films "Street Scene" and "Caun-sellor-at-Law" were adaptations of plays by Mr. Rice.

I am assuming that most of us are against censorship so I am not going to talk too much about the theory of it. I am not very much interested in the theory of censorship because I think the theory is unimportant. I have been fighting censorship more or less for 15 years, and have heard so many arguments about it, on both sides, that get nowhere. What I am interested in is its application as a practical matter. Whatever the argument for or against censorship may be, it always gets down to a question of individuals and that is to say the individuality of the particular people who are the censors. It doesn't matter what theory is behind your censorship, what principles are behind it, its actual administration is always in the hands of a small number of individuals, sometimes of one individual.

My experience with censors (and I have had a good deal) has been that they fall roughly into two categories—the neurotic and the crooked. The neurotic category is typified by the kind of person who has an abnormal or a distorted interest in sex or in some other important vital question and as a result of his abnormal interest in it, has a feeling of guilt about it and in

order to make himself feel less guilty, he undertakes to set himself up as a criterion for the morals of other people. In long years of experience I have only met one man, a clergyman singularly enough, who admitted that he personally was in any moral danger. I was quite surprised and amazed when he made the admission to me in a letter, that he personally felt the need of censorship because of the fact that he, himself, felt that his moral life was in constant danger and that he had to have some protection. But he is the only individual whom I have ever known to make such an admission. All the other advocates of censorship are perfectly sure about their own moral rightness and are always terribly concerned about the moral rightness of their neighbors. Now the arch example of the neurotic type of censor is Anthony Comstock, of course, who for a long time was the head of that splendid organization, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, in New York City. But Anthony Comstock, who for many years was our moral custodian, has gone to his reward, leaving I am told, a very complete library of pornographic literature behind him, and undoubtedly at this moment he is busily engaged in pinning fig leaves on the Angel Gabriel.

But the other type of censor, unfortunately, never dies because he is self-perpetuating, the political censor. The fellow to whom the job of censorship is a political

one must find something to censor, because if he reports there is nothing to censor why obviously his job ceases, and therefore whether there is anything censorable or not he must find it. This kind of censorship becomes a vested interest. Organizations are built up. There are jobs and they have their lobbyists. They get appropriations. There are soft berths for the politically faithful and that, of course, is a very prevalent and very well known type of censorship which we have had engrafted upon us. We all know that it is much easier to create political jobs than it is to destroy them, and once this incubus is forced upon us it is awfully hard to get rid of it.

I have here a book* compiled by an organization in which I happen to be active, the National Council on Freedom from Censorship, which is an affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union. What we have done here simply is to compile the cuts which have been made in New York State by the censors. It is a book of about one hundred pages, and to those of you who are interested in knowing what you have missed in the pictures I heartily recommend this book. It is a complete list of the cuts. I may say that since the publication of this book the State Board of Education, under which our censorship operates, has refused to issue to our Committee further lists of cuts; in other words there is now a censorship on censorship and you can see the implications of that. Not only are we being censored but we may not even know what it is that the censors are doing. I am going very briefly to read to you six or eight or ten of these cuts that have been made in New York State. These are made from official reports and the language used here is the language of the state censors.

By the way, we hear a good deal of talk about the movies being chiefly concerned with sexual problems and sexual morality and so on. A compilation has been made of the nature of the cuts shown here and only 44%, that is considerably less than half of the cuts, deal with matters pertaining even remotely to sex.

I took ten minutes this morning to just pick out at random a half-dozen cuts. (I could have gone on and picked out a hun-

dred.) Here is one, this piece of dialogue that is cut from a picture called, *Call Her Savage*. The speech that was cut is: "You know experience should have taught you, my dear, that the name Smith is always suspicious on the hotel register."

Here is a cut from a picture called *Central Park*: "Eliminate all views of guns where crooks hold up cars in Central Park." This, of course, is in the interest of the perpetuation of the generally held theory that lolly-pops are used in making hold-ups instead of guns.

Here is another: "Eliminate view of Jack actually reaching into Burns' pocket and taking pocketbook."

Just how these things affect the morals of audiences you, yourselves, can determine.

"Eliminate distinct view of denomination of bill." I may say this means the monetary value of a bank note and not the religious beliefs of somebody named William.

Here is one which eliminates the sub-title, "Long live Soviet Power in the entire world!" This I take seriously because it seems to me to get at the root of one of the basic problems of censorship, and that is the use of censorship for the purpose of maintaining the political status quo, of suppressing anything that could be regarded as threatening the established political or social institutions.

Now you can readily see that we enter here the field of controversy and that all of these censorships which are set up under the guise of sex morality and so on are inevitably used for the suppression of unorthodox views whether political, religious, social or whatnot. Now I am not a Communist nor am I arguing for Communism, but I insist that any censorship system which suppresses an utterance to the effect, "Long live Soviet Power" is politically and extremely dangerous because we could readily get to the point where if somebody said in a picture, "I don't like the NRA," censorship would have full power to cut it out and nobody would know anything about it.

I am going to read a few more of these: "Shorten first two kissing scenes of couple at table to four feet each." The feet, of course, refer to the film and not to the pedal extremities of the participants. But I think that the motion picture censor-

* "What Shocked the Censors," 1933.

ships have established something new in the world by measuring—I mean I think it is a new scientific principle, the ability to measure the propriety of kisses in terms of feet and inches. I think that is an entirely new science and one for which the censors deserve credit. It used to be said that after nine feet any kiss was immoral. I don't know whether that is true or not.

Now we have here one, "Eliminate view of baby boy in the basket displaying sex." The censors are terribly concerned about the fact that children have different sexes. It seems to be particularly reprehensible in what they call native children. I don't know exactly what native children are, but apparently this sex differentiation in native children is a most reprehensible thing because this book is full of eliminations of views showing the sex of native children. This is one that appears on almost every page. I just want you to know what it is that you are being protected against.

Also views of native children being nursed by their mothers are frequently eliminated, thus helping to preserve the idea that children are not only brought by the stork but are fed by the ravens apparently.

Here is one cut which says: "Eliminate prolonged views of exhaust pipe with gas pouring out of it." That sounds rather innocuous but apparently it was poison gas or something of the sort.

Here we have one which says: "Eliminate scene of Dr. Brenton shaking hands with Judge." Now whether that is in the interest of morality of the doctor or of the judge it doesn't say. If we have both doctors and judges present it might be interesting for them to argue it out between them.

In a title, "from the Bible, the book of cruelty and jealousy and wrath" are eliminated the words "the book of cruelty and jealousy and wrath." Also eliminated are the words "The book from which all the merciless tyrannies of the world have taken their laws." So that literary criticism of the Bible also falls under the ban of the censors.

Now here we see how any kind of social and political, any kind of unorthodox social and political propaganda, is immediately stepped on by the censors. Here is a cut which says, "Why don't you yaps quit rais-

ing families if you can't feed them?" Now that is almost intelligent for movies. I mean it has some social criticism in it, and even the beginning of an idea in it. But you see immediately the censorship operates to eliminate things of this sort. I think you will all find this book most helpful and instructive.

There is just one more cut which is a highly technical one. From "Just because a lot of you white collar guys let those grafters that run the government fool you with that stuff," they cut out, "grafters that run the government." In other words you will find again and again in this book where there is any suggestion that government is corrupt, any collusion between the police and crime, any dishonesty in Washington or other high places, all of such things are immediately suppressed by the censors. So that this operates only very partially and very indirectly as a means of controlling what we call morality but actually acts as a very, very important means of controlling social opinion.

Now the United States Supreme Court has held or did hold of the silent pictures that the free speech guarantees of the United States Constitution did not apply to them because they were not news disseminating agencies but were merely a means of entertainment. I think we might quarrel with that latter description of them, but in any case the Constitution did not apply to silent films. In the introduction of dialogue certainly the sound pictures should come under the free speech guarantees of the Constitution.

It seems to me, then, that this is the case against censorship, the fact that always it gets down to what some individual thinks is good for some other individuals. We here in New York have had this motion picture censorship foisted upon us. We are trying now to repeal it in the Legislature. Entrenched interests will fight us. The fellows who have jobs at stake will fight us. And yet two or three individuals, we don't even know who they are—I don't know who they are,—working in secluded places by themselves determine what the six million people in New York City and the twelve million people in New York State, if you like, shall or shall not see. It is an intol-

erable condition. It is one which can be met only by a very articulate public opinion and I don't agree that there is anything to be hoped from the motion picture industry. You have very little to hope from the press. The only hope that there is, is for the intelligent people in every community to get up and make themselves articulate, to bring pressures to bear on the Legislatures to repeal these laws, to abolish these Boards of Censorship, and to create a public opinion in their own community which will establish the principle that adult people are capable of judging for themselves what they may or may not see. Neurotic and psychopathic people should be under the care of

physicians and censorship boards should not be run to decide what normal people shall see on the basis of what is bad for psychopaths to see.

As far as children are concerned, I believe that it is the function of parents to censor for their children and that it is not a state function. And I want to say right here and now that I believe that if less attention were paid to the so-called moral welfare of children and a little more attention were paid to creating a social system in which there were no child labor and in which children were fed and clothed and had proper education, that it would be a much more important social function.

The Juniors Speak for Themselves

PARENTS who have felt tremors of misgiving over the effects of the motion picture on their children's lives may well take heart because the young people themselves have gone "on record" regarding this mooted question of the movie and its power over the youth of the country.

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures during the past holiday week held several meetings of boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 15 years to discuss motion pictures and to preview current entertainment films. These groups were a fair cross-section of the city of New York—they were not chosen by any specifications or qualifications, just a certain number were invited from some of the public schools of the city, groups from communities near the metropolitan area and from community centers—some came from Jersey and Staten Island, some from the East Side, others from the West Side, from the Bronx and Brooklyn, from Harlem and the Village. Needless to say, they all go to the movies and they all have ideas about movies.

Now for the record—and in this case there is no red herring drawn across the trail—of their own free will these boys and girls listed their favorite pictures. With both boys and girls *Little Women* rated the most votes, next to this picture with the boys came *Massacre*, a film dealing with the social question of the treatment of the Indian of today by the white man, then *Son of a*

Sailor, a Joe E. Brown comedy, and next *Cavalcade*. Other favorites of the boys were: *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Bring 'em Back Alive*, *Penrod and Sam*, *Lone Cowboy*, *Death Takes a Holiday*, *Six of a Kind*, *Carolina*, *Beau Geste*, *David Harum*, *Ben Hur*, *Wings*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *This Day and Age*, *Palooka*, *S O S Iceberg*, *Trader Horn*, *Disraeli*, *Rex King of Wild Horses*, *Man who Played God*, *The Last Laugh* and *Flying Down to Rio*.

The girls' runner-up for first place after *Little Women* was *Flying Down to Rio*—they seem much more partial to the musicals than the boys and their reasons regarding their preference for this type were "the singing, dancing, music, scenery, costumes and happy ending." Next in line of the favorites came *Footlight Parade*, then *Alice in Wonderland*, next *Forty-Second Street*, and *Cavalcade*. Other choices of the girls were: *Man of Two Worlds*, *The Champ*, *When a Feller Needs a Friend*, *The World Changes*, *Disraeli*, *Smilin' Through*, *Carolina*, *Berkley Square*, *The Cat and the Fiddle*, *Massacre*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Going Hollywood*, *Six of a Kind*, *Skippy*, *I am Suzanne*, *Smoky* and several of the young ladies liked "any of Zane Grey's stories."

It would seem quite obvious that if these examples represent the type of motion picture that makes the greatest impression on the children of today there is little cause for parents to consider the cinema a problem.

What Can Research Prove?

DR. FREDERIC M. THRASHER

Associate Professor of Education, New York University

This address was delivered by Dr. Thrasher at the Tenth Annual Conference of the National Board of Review held in New York City in February.

THE question which has been proposed for me to discuss is one of far-reaching significance, not only from the standpoint of the motion picture, but also with reference to the control of the world in which we live and the advantageous solution of our social problems. To answer this question properly involves an assumption of a basic knowledge as to the meaning of science, not only of natural science, but also of social science, which has its own special methods and techniques. Furthermore, it involves a knowledge of the nature of the most important instrument of social science—namely, social research, which in itself is a highly technical field. It is obviously impossible in this address to cover the subject adequately. All that can be done is to present certain outstanding points which will have significance in connection with the motion picture and which are based upon long experience in dealing with scientific problems of this type.

Within the past decade the educator has been forced to revamp his definition of education. This has been a painful process because the educator is fundamentally a traditionalist and tends to lag behind the demands made upon him by changing social conditions. He has been forced to recognize the fact, however, that most education and the most important education goes on outside his formalized procedures. This vital informal education takes place at home, at work, on the streets, in the play-groups and gangs, in the settlement houses, and in all the pursuits of leisure. It is often these informal experiences that make or break the child's character or personality in spite of all that formal procedures have been able to do. The process of making citizens, therefore, has largely escaped the school-room.

Along with this recognition of the far-reaching importance of informal education has come the realization that the motion pic-

ture is one of the most potent factors in American life. Without intending to educate and with its primary motive to amuse, the entertainment film, nevertheless, can no longer be overlooked as an educational force. It has had undreamed of influence in the imparting of knowledge, the development of social attitudes, and the molding of character and personality. The educational or scientific film and the creative film likewise must be regarded as tremendously potent educative instruments. The determination of just what the motion picture does and can do along these lines can only be made by scientific research. Common sense is just as futile in attempting to solve this problem as it would be in determining the etiology of cancer or the correct methods of building the George Washington Bridge. Personal observation is valueless because, unless it is controlled by research techniques, it may as well give magic formulae as scientific results.

One of the outstanding causes of the confusion, the conflict, the maladjustment, the distress, and the tragedy which we see all about us, is that science has not been applied to the solution of social and educational problems. In the field of natural science, we see quite a different situation. On its material side modern civilization has achieved a brilliant control over nature and this control has been based primarily upon the results of scientific thinking and research. On its social side, however, civilization has not justified its claims. Social organization in America is chaotic and permeated with social maladjustments expressing themselves in poverty, unemployment, crime, political corruption, vice, and violence. Civilization itself is constantly threatened with the slow disintegration wrought by its own social weaknesses or the violent destruction brought about by war or revolution.

Our very success in the conquest of nature has created new and unprecedented social problems with which we are not prepared to cope. Mechanical and industrial engineering has brought us large-scale ma-

chine production with its consequent disorganizing effects upon family life, upon employment, upon standards of living, etc. Automotive engineering has brought us the motor car with increased mobility and a widening of the scope of crime and vice as well as recreation. The perfection, through scientific research, of the radio and the sound motion picture has opened up new worlds to millions of people; yet these new means of social contact have brought us new problems of education and social control. The machine age has in many cases weakened the traditional social controls represented by the family and the small community. We have passed from an agricultural to an urban civilization. Primary groups have been giving way to secondary groups. The growth of cities and metropolitan regions has intensified every problem involving social relationships. We are living in a new world brought to us by the application of scientific methods to natural phenomena.

It would seem only logical that the material progress brought about through the application of the scientific method should point the way to *social* progress. And it does. There is but one answer. Social progress can come about only through the application of scientific methods to the study and solution of social problems. This is not because there is anything magical in science. Science is merely experience under control. Scientific research, whether in the natural or social fields, represents merely a verified and validated method of summarizing experience and making it available for the use of the engineer. Social research follows the same broad principles in attacking its problems as does research in mathematics, astronomy or chemistry. Just as the research techniques of each of these sciences are different, so also the techniques of research in the social sciences must be adapted to meet the peculiarities of the subject matter with which they deal. It is obvious, therefore, that research is worse than futile if it is not carried on under the direction of experts in the particular fields in which lie the problems that are to be studied.

In discussing the topic of this paper, "What Can Research Prove?" the question naturally arises as to why science and re-

search have not done more in the solution of social and educational problems. The reasons are not difficult to explain. They may be stated under five different headings:

1. In the first place, the subject matter of the social sciences is intangible. You can dissect a frog or boil a piece of metal in a test tube, but you cannot so easily deal with a trait of character, a social institution, or a social attitude.

2. Human relationships and personalities, moreover, are the most complex of all objects which may be investigated by science and for this reason their observation and measurement is exceptionally difficult.

3. Furthermore, controlled observation, which is the basic first step in all use of the scientific method, is particularly difficult in situations involving human beings. People do not care to be observed and are likely to employ every means of hiding facts unless special techniques are discovered to secure their cooperation. The average human being wants to keep his private life and his design for living to himself.

4. Experiment involving human beings is even more difficult than observation because our modern philosophy of life regards every human being, at least theoretically, as an end in himself. Human values cannot be violated in the interests of research.

5. The fifth, and perhaps most important reason which explains the slowness with which scientific research has been applied to the problems of social engineering is the almost universal existence of personal and group bias or prejudice. This bias makes people afraid of research for fear that it will reveal a truth which in some way will threaten their welfare or it makes them loathe to accept the truth once it has been established. It is very important in discussing just what research can prove that we see clearly the operation of this phase of human nature because it is pertinent to a clear understanding of the facts.

Bias may be simply defined as some characteristic of the individual or the group which leads to resistance of scientific investigation of a given phenomenon, or which makes it impossible to see the truth after such an investigation has been made. A good example of this personal element may be cited in the case of the astronomer who

saw canals on the surface of one of the planets because of a peculiarity of his own eyes. Other observers could not see the canals and this led to the discovery of the personal factor which invalidated his observations. Unfortunately, the use of scientific methods in studying schools, business establishments, boys' clubs, industries, government, churches, motion pictures, the radio, or any social institution is likely to meet with tremendous resistance because of the functioning of a variety of different types of bias.

There are four of these chief types of bias that need to be distinguished and described because it is obvious that they must be overcome before research can prove anything. But before they are overcome they must be recognized.

1. The first of these is what has been called ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is a universal characteristic of every group, whether it be family, fraternity, community, race, or nation to exalt its own characteristics at the expense of other groups. Members of a given group tend to believe themselves superior to outsiders. This type of bias makes it very difficult to scientifically investigate the relationships between groups such as international relations or race relations. It is difficult to investigate the characteristics of any one group because each group fears a loss of dignity or that its status may be impaired. The so-called Nordic myth, which is the belief in the native superiority of the blonde, represents this type of bias and is exemplified by Hitlerism.

2. A second type of bias which may be equally pernicious is conservatism or the blind belief in the past merely because it is the past. The conservative person or group is afraid of scientific research because of an unreasoning determination to stick to the past at all costs and to believe in a given type of human behavior or institution merely "because it has always been done that way." People given to this type of bias are afraid of new ideas.

3. A third type of bias, and one which is perhaps even more dangerous, is sentiment. Our sentiments are our most precious possessions; yet they may become highly irrational and may balk social progress. The aim of social control is to develop

in children useful sentiments which support an efficient and orderly society. An example of an irrational sentiment is one which glorifies the gangster or makes crime attractive by presenting it in a romantic light. Yellow newspapers are often guilty of stimulating sentiments of this type among their more illiterate readers.

When such sentiments interfere with research the good results of science are jeopardized. A good illustration of this may be cited in the sentimental campaigns against vaccination and vivisection. Vivisection is a type of research absolutely necessary to the development of surgery and the consequent relief of human suffering. Yet the sentimentalists would abolish it in the interests of suffering dogs and cats.

4. A fourth and last type of bias and one which is far more insidious and powerful in its resistance to scientific investigation is what we may call, for want of a better term, the vested interest. Vested interests may be of any type. Experience has shown them to be political, economic, religious and educational. Politicians are notoriously afraid of scientific research because their primary aim is to stay in office and they are more interested in getting votes than in serving well the people who elect them. They have learned many tricks to discredit the results of research and one of the most interesting of these is to throw dust in the air by the introduction of irrelevant issues in order to distract public attention from the facts that have been revealed. Interests vested in political hands may lead to persecution by politicians and their allies of those who are desirous of scientifically evaluating the work of any branch of local or national government.

Interests vested in business and industry may likewise fear scientific study because such study may endanger profits in one way or another. There has always been a conflict between science and religion because religious functionaries have feared the loss of power and prestige. Likewise any given educational institution is likely to resent scientific investigation for fear that alterations in the interest of efficiency may result in institutional changes which will decrease salaries or eliminate personnel. Altruism is rarely developed sufficiently in human na-

ture to lead to an unselfish submission to impartial study. This situation makes the application of scientific research to human institutions exceedingly difficult and blocks the use of the results of such research by the social engineer who may attempt to build a better community life.

Yet it is this very function of research that makes it the most important agency of social progress in the world today. The gains of science in its successful conquest of nature will be lost or denied if the same methods are not applied to the solution of social problems. Science, for example, has developed unthought-of instrumentalities which may be turned to the uses of peace and social efficiency; yet the self-same achievements may be used to destroy civilization if science is unable to make an equivalent conquest in the field of social control.

It is patent, therefore, that one of the most important social tasks of the present day is to investigate searchingly and to measure scientifically the results of all human institutions. Such a procedure is inescapable if all or any of our institutions are to survive. The alternative is a chaos worse than that we are now experiencing and the possible suicide of our present social order. The only justification for the continuance of any institution is in its performance of a function which serves the community well. This applies equally to schools, motion pictures, boys' clubs, the radio, churches, business, industry, and the government itself. These institutions must be evaluated in terms of the social functions they are supposed to perform. Furthermore, their methods of achieving separate and varied policies must likewise be scientifically measured. To take an example from the field of education; the only real test of a language course is whether or not the person who is subjected to it can speak, read and write the language when he has finished the course. The real test of health education, is not verbal or written reactions from the child, but is the carry over of health instruction into the health habits of the child.

The basic problem of this type of social research is the measurement of influence of the institution, the program, or the activity to be evaluated and this is one of the most difficult of all research problems. How can

we measure the influence of a boys' club in the prevention of delinquency? How can we measure the influence of an educational program in the development of character? How can we measure the effects of the motion picture upon children and adults, in the fields of knowledge, health, emotions, social attitudes, and conduct?

One of the chief difficulties in attempting to measure the effect of any given type of social stimulation arises from the fact that a human being is never the product of one single influence. The human personality is the complex result of the interaction of a series of hereditary and experiential factors. A child with a given hereditary organic equipment begins his experiences even in prenatal life. As soon as he is born he begins to participate in a wide variety of social situations, all of which have important effects upon his intelligence, his temperament, his character, his personality. He participates in family life. He is affected by the economic and occupational status of his parents. He has experiences in his play-groups and gangs. He is assimilated to the cultural heritages of the group into which he is born and these cultural factors are widely different in different racial, nationality and community groupings. He is exposed to the effects of the funny papers, the books he reads, the magazines, the radio, the movies, and innumerable other influences. The attempt to disentangle and measure the effects of any one of these types of influence is a very difficult research problem, but one which has been largely solved by the application of research techniques which are validated and familiar to all persons who have been well trained in social research.

I am pointing out the tremendous difficulty of this type of research problem and yet in one sentence I am saying that the problem has been solved by the development of research techniques which everybody in the research field is familiar with.

At this point one might be tempted to go into a technical discussion of control groups, case-studies, and other devices which have made it possible in the social sciences to approximate the methods and results of the natural sciences. Such a discussion here, however, would probably serve no useful purpose. To persons who have not

had research training, it would be meaningless and to persons who have been so trained, it would merely represent the commonplace knowledge that is used effectively in thousands of researches in every branch of psychology, sociology, economics, and political science.

Suffice it to say here, that the difficulties which confront the research expert in the measurement of influence have been solved statistically by the use of properly equated control groups and experimentally by the employment of controlled observations and case-studies. As a result it is now possible to measure any sort of influence providing the research expert is given a free hand in planning his research and providing he is given the facilities and personnel for carrying them out. There is no technical difficulty which cannot be overcome by the application of research techniques which are now available. The general answer to our question, therefore: "What Can Research Prove?", is that research, expertly carried out, can prove anything and by that we mean: Research can determine the influence of the motion picture upon any human characteristic or type of behavior.

Yet it is not in the spirit of research to set out to prove anything. The scientist does not even employ the term *prove*. This term *prove* is a word better used by the debater, the lawyer and the reformer. It would be a good idea to confine its use to the Congressional Record. Science and research are impartial. Their purpose is to seek the truth and not to prove one belief or another. Research does not seek to prove a given hypothesis, although it may properly seek to test a hypothesis. The ultimate goal of all research and all science is to arrive at generalizations which are merely descriptions of what will happen in all cases under a certain set of specific conditions. There is a great deal of confusion in the popular mind about the nature of scientific laws. The results of scientific research are not to be confused with moral and civil laws. A moral law tells us what we ought to do. A civil law tells us what we must do. A natural or scientific law tells us only what we can do.

It is impossible, therefore, to violate a natural law. Take the law of gravity, for

example. If you are on the tenth floor of the Hotel Pennsylvania and step out of the window, you do not violate the law of gravity; you merely illustrate it. This applies equally to the laws of social behavior, the laws of learning, the laws of habit formation, the laws of emotional reaction, the laws of health. It is impossible to violate any of them; you are able merely to put yourself in a position to profit or to be injured by their operation. Our studies of the causes of delinquency and crime, for example, indicate that boys who have had a certain type of experience on the streets of crime breeding areas invariably become delinquents. If we had enough facts about a human being, it would be possible to predict exactly what he would do in a given situation. As it is, we are able to predict human behavior to a very large extent and this is becoming more and more possible as our researches into social behavior are developing. The actuarial method of predicting parole violation illustrates this. This is a statistical method, known for years to the insurance companies, by which it is now possible to tell with a high degree of accuracy what man will violate his parole when he is released from prison. This is a scientific method, the result of research. And more interesting than that, it is actually being used in the prisons of Illinois. For the first time you have a non-political parole board so that the parole board has a trained sociologist and when a man comes up whose case is to be considered, his case is referred to the research department and the research department is able to tell with a fair degree of accuracy whether or not if this man is permitted to leave prison he will commit another type of crime and endanger public welfare or again come back to prison.

The application of all this to the study of the motion picture and its effects should be clear enough. It is quite possible to measure, for example, the effects of motion pictures of various types upon learning and retention. The effectiveness of motion picture films as teaching instruments has been measured in a series of major experiments beginning with Mr. McClusky's work under Freeman at the University of Chicago in 1922-23, the Middlesex experiments in 1930 and including the Fox experiment in

1931, Clark's experiment at New York University in 1932, the Erpi picture experiment in teacher training, the Harvard talking picture experiment, and the Arnspiger sound-picture experiment in natural science and music. These researches dealt with the instructional effectiveness of educational films. One of the most convincing studies yet made in this field dealt solely with the effect of entertainment films. This study, which was carried on under the direction of Dr. George D. Stoddard, Director, Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, State University of Iowa, and Perry W. Holaday of the Indianapolis Public Schools, had as its purpose the measurement of the effects of motion pictures on the memories of children; specifically, the retention of film content and the changes in quantity and accuracy of general information, including the direction and duration of the changes.

Without going into the details of other studies, it may be said that it is possible to measure the effects of motion pictures upon sleep motility, social attitudes, emotional responses, social behavior, and delinquency and crime. This is possible providing such studies are set up under expert research guidance and providing they are carried out by the use of scientific techniques of research which have come to be recognized as being valid in this field. Such research studies will show definite results and will throw light upon many problems related to the motion picture. The interpretation of these results, of course, should be made with great caution. It is here that a danger of bias may enter. The motion picture industry is likely to see in such results support for its own policies; whereas the advocates of motion picture censorship are likely to find support for their own cause. In either

case the interpretations may be erroneous unless the greatest caution is used. Any person or any group has the right to use research results in the solution of practical problems. But when such findings are so used, the responsibility of the research expert ceases and the justification of such use must fall upon the persons or groups who use them.

Exhibition of Cinematographic Art

THE International Institute of Educational Cinematography, under the auspices of the "Biennal," is organizing the second International Exhibition of Cinematograph Art of Venice to be held August 1st to 20th.

Many nations have promised their collaboration and are to send examples of their best films which, as is required, will not have been shown publicly. Countries to take part are the United States, Germany, Great Britain, France, Hungary, Japan, Holland, U. S. S. R., Spain, Poland, Switzerland, and India.

The first day of the Exhibition will be devoted to the projection of Italian films. The program will include the projection of films of special character: vanguard and super-realistic films, scene and music symphonies, short documentaries of particular importance, animated cartoons especially produced for the Venice performances. All the films will be shown in their original version.

The Head of the Italian Government has offered two cups as prizes to be awarded, one to the best film of foreign production, and the other to the best film of Italian production.

Representation from the United States has been announced by United Artists, Paramount, Fox, Warner Brothers, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, RKO, Universal and Columbia.

The Exhibition has been called a unique occasion for artists, producers, distributors and technicians to meet, and one which will afford opportunities for an exchange of views without precedent.

The experiments referred to in the column above appear in the following publications:

- Freeman, Frank N., *Visual Education*, University of Chicago Press, 1924.
Sound Films in Schools, School Masters Publishing Co., London, 1931.
Sound Motion Pictures as a Factor in Education, Fox Film Corp., N. Y. C., 1931.
 Dr. C. C. Clark, *Sound Motion Pictures as an Aid in Classroom Teaching*, New York University School of Commerce, 1932.
 Devereux, F. S., *The Educational Talking Picture*, University of Chicago Press, 1933.
 Rudon, Philip J., *The Sound Motion Picture in Science Teaching*, Harvard University Press, 1933.
 Arnspiger, V. C., *Measuring the Effectiveness of Talking Pictures as Teaching Aids*, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933.
 Stoddard, George P. and Holaday, Perry W., *Getting Ideas from the Movies*, Macmillan, 1933.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Constant Nymph

Adapted by Dorothy Farnum from Margaret Kennedy's novel; directed by Basil Dean; photographed by M. Greenbaum; music by Eugene Goossens and John Greenwood; produced by Fox-British-Gaumont; distributed by Fox Film Co.

The cast

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Albert Sanger | Lyn Harding |
| Lewis Dodd | Brian Aherne |
| Jacob Birnbaum | Fritz Schultz |
| Mr. Trigorin | Jim Gerald |
| Roberto | Tony De Lungo |
| Charles Churchill | Athole Stewart |
| Teresa | Victoria Hopper |
| Paulina | Peggy Blythe |
| Tony | Jane Baxter |
| Kate | Jane Cornell |
| Susan | Beryl Laverick |
| Linda | Mary Clare |
| Florence | Leonora Corbett |

SANGER'S CIRCUS — that harum-scarum brood of a self-exiled English musical genius which Margaret Kennedy created in her well-loved novel—lives again in this picture. The two boys are missing, to be sure, but the girls are there, and as in the book Teresa and her love for Lewis Dodd are the important part of the story.

In the screening of any novel many incidents have to be sacrificed and a good deal of plot and character simplified. *The Constant Nymph* suffers less than most novels under this necessary process, because it has been applied with affectionate sympathy as well as skill, and no one can reasonably complain that the book has "been done wrong by." The first part, with its lovely Tyrolean setting, manages to capture a surprising amount of the essential glamour that surrounded the Karindehütte and the exira-

ordinary family that lived in it. Wild, wilful and lovable, in a turmoil of gaiety and temperament, old Sanger and his menage are sketched in lightly and charmingly, and the fatal, inevitable triangle begins to take shape. Then, after Dodd's rash marriage to the English cousin, the scene shifts to London, and the results of the marriage emerge. It was a disastrous thing for Dodd, even if he didn't realize how closely—even in her girlhood—Teresa was interwoven into his life, not to realize how impossible it was to bend his genius into conformity with Florence's background of smart social conventions. So when, in the midst of his half unconscious revolt, Teresa comes along for refuge in her flight from school, his mistake becomes glaringly obvious. There the girl has been all these years, understanding him, understanding his music, loving him in her frank and clear-eyed way.

The tragic end in a dismal Brussels boarding-house is one of those whims of destiny that have no logic in character or in ethics. But there is a kind of gallantry and nobility of spirit in Teresa's loyalty that makes it something more than pathetic: it is fine and heart-warming.

Mr. Dean's affection for his material is a great help to him in his cinematic shortcomings as a director. His habit of approach is through the theatre, not the camera, and moreover he is working with a novel which he himself helped fashion into a play for the stage, so he is apt to let his flow of action get muddled sometimes, and to make use of movie clichés that belong to the silent days of Cecil B. DeMille. But these little artistic anachronisms seem very unimportant in

the warm and tender sympathy with which he has translated Miss Kennedy's story to the screen, keeping his people true and human, and—a miracle!—making an atmosphere of genuine musical creation that can be accepted without retching.

The director had the help of a fine camera man—the photography, without stunts, is lovely and effective all through—and sympathetic and skillful actors. From old Sanger down to Roberto, the man-of-all-work, the players are all admirably chosen. Some are more than just that: Lyn Harding in the brief sketch of old Sanger, Mary Clare as his last consort, Leonora Corbett as the London-bred girl fighting for her vanity and her love. But most outstanding are Brian Aherne, with the enormously difficult job of

making Lewis Dodd understandable, and Victoria Hopper, whose lovely embodiment of the constant nymph is about as near perfect as such a thing could be.

The Constant Nymph—like *Little Women*—belongs in the class of motion pictures that are not real creations, but a translation to the screen of something already existing in another form. The better the novel, the further short the screen version must fall from its original. *The Constant Nymph* stands way above the usual book adaptation for those who have read the book, and for others it is a picture that can stand confidently on its own merits. The only thing one can quarrel with in it is the sound, which is often notably poor.—J. S. H.

(Rated exceptional)

No Greater Glory

Adapted by Jo Swerling from "The Paul Street Boys," a novel by Ferenc Molnar; directed by Frank Borzage; photographed by Joseph August; produced and distributed by Columbia.

The cast

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Nemescek | George Breakston |
| Boka | Jimmie Butler |
| Gereb | Jackie Searle |
| Feri Ats | Frankie Darro |
| Csonakos | Donald Haines |
| Ferdie Pasztor | Rolf Ernest |
| Henry Pasztor | Julius Molnar |
| Kolnay | Wesley Giraud |
| Csele | Beaudine Anderson |
| Richter | Bruce Line |
| Gereb's father | Samuel Hinds |
| Watchman | Christian Rub |
| Nemescek's father | Ralph Morgan |
| Nemescek's mother | Lois Wilson |
| Racz | Egon Brecher |
| Doctor | Frank Reicher |

NO GREATER GLORY, whether ironically or not, has to do with patriotism. It is obviously something more than just a story, but what its "message" is depends on individual preconceptions. It may mean that war in defense of one's country is noble and glorious—some people, with all the emotional violence of the pacifist, call it vicious war propaganda. It may mean that all war is futile—two large reviewing groups of youngsters, with

remarkable unanimity, were sure that was the intention of the film. It may mean that the fighting instinct that makes wars inevitable is ineradicable in man. Perhaps the intention back of the picture and the picture's ultimate effect are different. Certainly the film has the rare quality of being able to stir up discussion.

Without being acquainted with the Molnar novel on which the film was based one has to infer the meanings and intentions from the film itself. It appears to be an allegory that often forgets to be allegorical: that is, the director sometimes gets so interested in some of his characters that he makes their individuality overshadow their allegorical meaning. This results in a curious, and often confusing, conflict between realism and symbolism. You find yourself thinking that these boys are not real, and probably not meant to be, then suddenly you are feeling that one of them is intensely, even painfully, human.

For the story is all about boys, one group of them apparently well-to-do children who have an unused lumber-yard for a playground where they play soldiers—among them a tailor's son, the only private in the juvenile army, looked down upon by all the others. Another group of bigger, rougher boys, some of them bullies, wants the lum-



The mimic soldiers in "No Greater Glory."

ber-yard, and a miniature war is fought for its possession. The scene is in Budapest, where the boys, living amid close memories of the war and where military organization is part of the air they breathe, of course, reflect the attitudes and feelings of their environment.

The main plot is the war for the lumberyard, fought according to that paradoxical code, military ethics. Herein lies a good deal of satire, usually amusing, often bitter. The secondary plot, but the one that arouses the deepest emotional response, concerns the tailor's son, Erno Nemescek, and his passionate desire, childish and blundering, to be loyal and heroic for the sake of his gang.

It is the Nemescek boy's story, intensely real, set in a general pattern of unreality, that makes the total effect of the film somewhat blurred and uncertain. The tailor and his wife, poor and hard-working, and their little boy, are real people, everything they

do is directly human, full of individual meaning. All the other characters are puppets, symbols of this or that social ideal or social caste, but they are not always clear or consistent puppets: when they come in contact with the Nemescek boy they react humanly, as individuals. As the story of the forlorn and pathetic youngster deepens, gathering personal intensity till the boy's death in defense of his flag, the satirical design of the mimic war twists and breaks up, the focus shifts from ideas to a person. Perhaps, underneath everything, that is the purpose of the film, to show that projects which on the surface seem national or impersonal resolve themselves fundamentally into questions of personal aim and emotion.

No Greater Glory is an unusual film, exciting and moving. It has the virtues and the shortcomings of any film directed by Frank Borzage: vividness and emotional force, with a tendency—often more than a

tendency—toward prettiness and sentimentality. In this picture the director sometimes seems uncertain of the meanings of his material, and his use of old soldiers to comment occasionally on the action, instead of sharpening his point seems rather to underscore his uncertainty.

The acting of the boys is unusually good. If sometimes they seem unlike real boys the fault, one would say, is not with the young actors but with a certain directorial bewilderment about what they are intended to represent.—J. S. H.

(Rated honorable mention)

Mr. Arliss' Latest

GEORGE ARLISS' films can be called *his* in a peculiarly possessive sense—they invariably and unmistakably are a one-man job, in which choice of subject, treatment, writing, direction and acting all conform to a single individual taste and mentality and method. *The House of Rothschild* is no exception. It differs from his other films principally in handsomeness of production and a livelier sense of showmanship, shown particularly in a certain timeliness of interest. Whether this timeliness is intentional—and propaganda—or accidental, it undoubtedly adds to the interest of the film in these days of Hitlerism and Silver Shirts. Otherwise the film vividly recalls *Disraeli*, with which it has several common characteristics, though it is a much better motion picture.

The Rothschild family—according to the film—was founded by a Shylock in Frankfurt, who craftily fooled or bribed the Jew-baiting tax-collectors, and on his death-bed counseled his sons to found houses in different European capitals, thus avoiding many of the dangers caused by frontiers and undependable traveling facilities. But always they were to stand firmly together as a family. Years passed—till, during Napoleon's exile to Elba, the Rothschild sons have become mighty money-lenders in Europe. By financing wars—in the interest, they oddly contend, of peace—they have

grown immensely rich and powerful, but their race is still persecuted and they themselves are made to feel many painful social barriers. And here comes the main part of the plot, wherein the Rothschild who has established himself in London cunningly worsts his enemies, wins political freedom for his race, saves England and gets a Gentile husband for his daughter.

The whole thing is a curious ethical mixture: we are asked, and often compelled, to admire cupidity, craftiness and vengefulness, for those are the qualities through which the ablest Rothschilds triumph, till in the end—in a gorgeous glow of Technicolor—the ruler of England rewards the hero by making him a Baron. If by any chance the film was supposed to display the admirable traits of Jewish character, it is a singularly ignoble set of traits that is set up for our edification. Yet no doubt it will be considered a perfectly moral picture.

As entertainment it is the best movie the venerable English star has appeared in. Mr. Arliss has a part that suits him with particular neatness, and his special theatrical effectiveness has abundant scope. For those who do not fall easily beneath his spell his methods will seem the same as ever—the carefully prepared entrances, as upon a stage, the feeding of lines to him to make him seem wise and witty, the crescendo of speeches rising to a ringing climax, the neat triumphant thrust by which he ends a scene and struts away. But rarely have these methods been used to better advantage. And his cast is better than usual: Mr. Arliss is not usually prone to surround himself with outstanding actors. Helen Westley fairly outshines the star at his own game, and Loretta Young, by some miracle that no young actress has achieved before, makes an Arliss heroine something more than a foxy grandpa's darling. But the minor Rothschild brothers—well, they are neither giants of finance nor of acting.—J.S.H.



New Type of Intimate Sound-Picture Theatre Planned

PLANS which will be carried out immediately, for a new sound-picture theatre in New York City, mark the return to the amusement field of a pioneer in motion picture exhibition, B. S. Moss.

Mr. Moss believes that the art of motion picture exhibition has not kept pace with the art of production of sound pictures. This new theatre, and others projected for the near future, will be dedicated to the same artistic perfection in the projection of voice and music that has been achieved in radio by modern acoustic science applied to the art of broadcasting.

Plots located in the metropolitan area at strategic points have already been assembled for the other theatres in this new enterprise. The theatres, according to the announcement, will be sound picture houses and not merely movie theatres converted to the presentation of talkies.

The project is based on the premise that the presentation of sound as an accompaniment of pictures is an art in itself. Sound with pictures must have its own theatre, completely sound-proofed and constructed in accordance with fundamental principles of modern acoustical science. The acoustician has blazed a trail far in advance of present-day exhibition of talking pictures. The sound theatre art which these new theatres will embody will catch up with acoustical science.

Improved lamps and improvements in screen and projection booths followed improved lighting and photography in the producers' studios. The screen now gives us a clear, artistic picture, but the theatres in which the accompanying voices and music are heard may give discord and distortion.

This new theatre will be of the intimate type, seating about 1,500. It will give spectator and listener all the advantages of the small legitimate theatre regardless of where his seat is situated. The volume and quality of sound as in a broadcasting studio, will always be under control of an expert at a sound board, who hears just what the

audience hears. The interior will be in the form of a bell, cut in half, and placed on the cut edges. The ceiling will be low and the seats arranged as an open-fan. Carpeted throughout, with seats fully upholstered, with walls, ceilings and floors sound-dampened with newly patented materials, and with doors, windows and skylights completely sound-proofed, there will be no distraction whatever from either interior repercussion or from outside noises leaking.

(Continued from page 2)

MEN IN WHITE—Clark Gable, Myrna Loy and Elizabeth Allan. From play by Sidney Kingsley. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Fine and moving drama of hospital life in which the hardships of the medical profession are shown by the story of a young doctor who is torn between his devotion to his work and his love for his fiancée. *Mature*.

MURDER IN TRINIDAD—Nigel Bruce and Heather Angel. From novel by John W. Vandercook. Fox. Interesting mystery involving smuggled diamonds, old pirate haunts and a mild romance. *Mature*.

*NO GREATER GLORY—George Breakston, Frankie Darro, Jimmy Butler and Jackie Searle. From story "The Paul Street Boys" by Ferenc Molnar. Columbia. Beneath the surface of a story dealing with the rivalry of two gangs of boys over a lumberyard they want for a playground, this picture—by turns amusing and stirring and moving—is a serious indictment of war. An excellent cast of boy actors make it unusually impressive. Suitable for church use. *Family*.

REGISTERED NURSE—Bebe Daniels and Lyle Talbot. From play by Florence Johns and Wilton Lackaye, Jr. First National. The story of a registered nurse's experiences in a large hospital. Though the picture holds the interest and for that reason is selected, it does not ring true as far as the incidents in the hospital are concerned. *Mature*.

RIPTIDE—Norma Shearer and Robert Montgomery. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The story of an English lord married to an American girl who has lived a reckless life, and how a crazy escapade in Cannes nearly wrecked their lives. Abounding in Edmund Goulding's particular kind of smartness and sophistication, it shows Norma Shearer a more finished and subtle actress on her return to the screen. *Mature*.

SHOW OFF, THE—Spencer Tracy and Madge Evans. From play by George Kelly. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The comedy of the bumptious young man whose conceit gets him into troubles that only luck can get him out of, brought vividly to life again by Spencer Tracy. *Family*.

SING AND LIKE IT—ZaSu Pitts, Pert Kelton and Edward Everett Horton. From the story

"So You Won't Sing, Eh" by *Aben Kandel*. RKO. Amusing comedy in which a hard-boiled gangster becomes afflicted with mother-love and on the score of his emotions puts over on the public a terrible show with a leading lady, unknown and with no looks or voice. Plenty of clever satire. *Family*.

STOLEN SWEETS—*Sally Blanc and Charles Starrett*. *Chesterfield*. Story of a wealthy girl who is brought up with every advantage except that of personal liberty. The acting and the comedy relief are good. *Family*.

THIS MAN IS MINE—*Kay Johnson, Constance Cummings and Ralph Bellamy*. From story "Love Flies Out of the Window" by *Anne M. Chapin*. RKO. A talkative but clever drawing room comedy about an ex-sweetheart coming back into a man's married life. Excellent cast. *Mature*.

UPPER WORLD—*Warren William, Mary Astor and Ginger Rogers*. *Warner*. An interesting picture with an excellent cast which tells how a wealthy man, lonely because of his wife's social engagements, seeks the friendship of a burlesque queen and becomes involved in a murder. *Mature*.

VERY HONORABLE GUY, A—*Joc E. Brown*. From story by *Damon Runyon*. *First National*. Comedy about a man who sells his body to a doctor to pay his debts and because he is an "honorable guy" he is willing to go through with it even though his luck has changed. *Family*.

*WILD CARGO—*Frank Buck*. RKO. Frank Buck capturing wild animals in Malaya, actually doing it himself. Immensely interesting, with an extraordinary amount of fascinating detail. Suggested for schools and libraries. Worth being kept permanently available. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel each unless marked otherwise)

INFORMATIONALS

ANIMAL ANTICS (Spotlight)—*Paramount*. Boxing bear, trained lions and tigers, etc. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 *BORN TO DIE—*Educational*. Interesting and educational picture of undersea life. Suggested for schools; worth being kept permanently available. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 JOURNEY IN FLANDERS (Magic Carpet)—*Fox*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 MARCH OF THE YEARS NOS. 3, 6-7—*Columbia*. Interesting events of the past. *Family*.
 PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NOS. 9-10—*Paramount*. *Family*.
 PATHE REVIEW NOS. 1-2—*RKO*. *Family*.
 PICTURESQUE SIAM (Newman Traveltalk)—*Vitaphone*. *Family*.
 WINTER THRILLS (World of Sport)—*Columbia*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.

CARTOONS

BETTY BOOP IN BLUNDERLAND (Talkartoon)—*Paramount*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 BUDDY AND TOWSER (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone*. *Family*.
 *FUNNY LITTLE BUNNIES (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 JOLLY GOOD FELONS (Little King)—*RKO*. *Family*.
 KINGS UP (Oswald)—*Universal*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.

LAZY BONES (Bouncing Ball)—*Paramount*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 LION TAMER, THE—*RKO*. *Family*.
 MAD HOUSE, THE (Terrytoon)—*Educational*. *Family*.
 MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE, THE (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 *PLAYFUL PLUTO (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 ROBIN HOOD (Willie the Whopper)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. *Family*.
 TUNE UP AND SING (Bouncing Ball)—*Paramount*. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SERIALS, SKITS

BIG CITY FANTASY—*Vitaphone*. Phil Spitalny and orchestra. *Family*.
 EVERYBODY LIKES MUSIC—*RKO*, 2 rls. Donald Novis, Irene Taylor and others. *Family*.
 HEART OF VALESKA, THE (Movie Tintypes)—*Fox*. 1910 drama of Russia. *Family*.
 HOLLYWOOD NEWSREEL—*Vitaphone*. Warner players doing stunts. *Family*.
 HULA HONEYMOON—*Educational*. Folk customs and music. *Family*.
 IN LAWS AND OUT—*RKO*, 2 rls. Edgar Kennedy makes an amusing effort to keep his temper. *Family*.
 "LOOK FOR THE SILVER LINING"—*Vitaphone*, 3 rls. Dorothy Stone and Gus Shy in echoes from Jerome Kern's "Sally." *Family*.
 LOST JUNGLE, THE (serial)—*Mascot*, 3 rls. No. 1—*Noah's Ark Island*. A serial that starts off excellently with Clyde Beatty and his animal act. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 MAID IN HOLLYWOOD—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 rls. Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly have a screen test made. *Family*.
 MICKEY'S RESCUE (Mickey's Gang)—*Columbia*, 2 rls. Mickey's little brother is saved from being adopted by some rich people. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 NEW DEAL RHYTHM—*Paramount*. Buddy Rogers in a musical number. *Family*.
 SCREEN SNAPSOTS NO. 6—*Columbia*. The small children of Hollywood stars. *Family*.
 SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 9—*Paramount*. Teddy Roosevelt in 1905; some stars at the beginning of their career; etc. *Family*.
 STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 38—*Universal*. Chinese dentist; lambchop-eating fish; etc. *Family*. *Junior matinee*.
 TRICK GOLF—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. *Family*.
 WRONG DIRECTION—*RKO*, 2 rls. Edgar Kennedy's family interfere with his being a movie director. *Family*.

Come to the Party

MAY the fifth, marks the day for the National Board's sixth annual bridge party to be held under the auspices of the Membership Committee at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. Mrs. Oliver Harriman has graciously consented to again act as chairman of the day and Mr. Sidney S. Lenz will again be the welcome master of ceremonies. Among the handsome score prizes announced for this year's tournament are: a fox scarf, an electric bridge table, a lace dinner cloth, tickets for several Broadway successes. Warner Brothers have offered an unique prize—a copy of a dress worn by Kay Francis in *Mandalay*, to be made to the winner's measurements. Other properties worn or used by stars in their recent pictures will be donated by RKO and Fox. The tickets are on sale at the office of the National Board of Review at \$1.25 each.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. IX, No. 5



May, 1934

Developing the Right Taste
in Motion Pictures

Meeting the Public Demand
for Superior
Pictures

The Juniors Discuss
"No Greater Glory"

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

ALL MEN ARE ENEMIES—Hugh Williams, Helen Twelvetrees and Mona Barrie. From novel by Richard Aldington. Fox. Interesting story well acted and with nice photography. An Englishman finds love on the Island of Capri but the war calls him home. Years later, disillusioned, he returns to the island and regains happiness. *Mature.*

ARE WE CIVILIZED?—William Farnum, Raspin. An impassioned plea for freedom of thought, speech and press, and for international peace and understanding. The simple plot includes a resumé of the growth of civilization. Not the ordinary type of movie entertainment, but its sincerity and serious purpose command attention. Suggested for schools and libraries; for church use. *Family.*

CITY LIMITS—Ray Walker, Sally Blane and Frank Craven. From novel by Jack Woodford. Monogram. A more or less amusing story about a newspaper man who through sheer persistence gets the story at first hand of the strange disappearance of a railroad president. *Family.*

FINISHING SCHOOL—Frances Dee, Ginger Rogers and Bruce Cabot. RKO. A story with the background in a fashionable finishing school—one of the girls tries her best to conform to the rules but finds it difficult. *Mature.*

HALF A SINNER—Joel McCrea and Sally Blane. From play "Alias the Deacon" by John B. Hyman. Universal. An amusing comedy about a card shark who poses as a deacon—he takes everyone's money but he is so nice about it that he is well liked. The story holds the interest and the acting is good. *Family.*

I'LL TELL THE WORLD—Lee Tracy and Gloria Stuart. Universal. A newspaper reporter is kept hopping around the globe for his newspaper—he gets tangled up with a queen and manages not only to save her life but also to keep disgrace from falling on her people. The story has plenty of action and Lee Tracy portrays the wide-awake reporter with gusto. *Family.*

IN LOVE WITH LIFE—Lila Lee, Onslow Stevens and Dickie Moore. *Invincible.* An old man adopts his grandson but refuses to care for the boy's mother who had broken his heart when she eloped, but he eventually relents. *Family.*

MAN TRAILER, THE—Buck Jones. Columbia. Story of stage-coach days in Oklahoma, gold-robbers and a mysterious man from Texas. It is a good job of its kind, exciting and full of action for those who are not tired of Westerns. *Family.*

MANHATTAN LOVE SONG—Robert Armstrong and Dixie Lee. From novel by Cornell Woolrich. Monogram. An amusing and rather novel story of two Park Avenue girls who lose their money and find out some new things about life. *Family.*

MODERN HERO, A—Richard Barthelmess. From novel by Louis Bromfield. Warner. An interesting picture which follows the book closely with the exception of the ending. The story deals with a circus boy who rises to wealth and power. The acting is above the average and the story holds the interest throughout. *Mature.*

SISTERS UNDER THE SKIN—Elissa Landi, Frank Morgan and Joseph Schildkraut. Columbia. A picture smoothly directed and nicely acted, of a man who, in an attempt to regain his lost youth, retires from his highly profitable business and goes on a gay jaunt through Europe with a lovely young girl—he wins her gratitude and devotion, but not her love. *Mature.*

***STAND UP AND CHEER**—Warner Baxter, Madge Evans and Stepin Fetchit. Fox. A pretty swell revue, based on the idea of a Secretary of Amusement in the Cabinet to help banish the depression. Many lively and original skits in it, and it gets away from the usual plot of screen musicals. *Family.*

SUCH WOMEN ARE DANGEROUS—Warner Baxter, Rosemary Ames and Rochelle Hudson. From the story "Odd Thursday" by Vera Caspary. Fox. Beginning as a polite comedy of a popular novelist pursued by adoring women and ending with a tense murder trial. The "dangerous" woman is a young girl throwing herself at a kindly older man. More enjoyable for a mature audience but not unsuitable for such younger people as might be interested. *Family.*

(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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A New Election

THE National Board of Review takes pleasure in announcing to its friends and readers of this Magazine the recent election of Col. Roy W. Winton to its Executive Committee. Col. Winton, in accepting membership in this administrative body, states his reasons as follows:

"The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is interested in the widest development of the art of the motion picture, both as an individual activity and as a theatrical presentation. The National Board of Review is the oldest and most widely known organization whose chief function is the development of an improved public taste for motion pictures of all kinds, theatrical and non-theatrical. It is, therefore, an honor to be associated in its work as a member of its Executive Committee. The National Board's well worked out system of community cooperation, its sane attitude upon the importance of selection as opposed to censorship, as a method of social control of film entertain-

ment, and its keen interest in experiments in motion picture technique have demonstrated the Board's ability to serve as a practical instrumentality in promoting better films. To help this work is to support an activity that has demonstrated its value

over a quarter century."

Col. Winton was born in Huntington, Indiana, and educated in the public schools of Kansas and Oklahoma and received his A.B. from the University of Kansas in 1904. He was reporter, city editor and night editor on the Oklahoma State Capital and San Antonio Express from 1904 to 1906. He served in the United States Army in grades from private to major, with temporary war rank as lieutenant-colonel, from 1906 to 1921. The



Col. Roy W. Winton

years 1921 to 1926 were spent as a field worker and district representative for the National Recreation Association. He has been managing director of the Amateur Cinema League, Inc., since its organization in 1926.

He was a concert pianist and accompanist during his school years and was a Fellow in the Romance Language Department of the University of Kansas in 1904. An unusual activity was his participation as an official in the last public land offering made by the United States—Kiowa and Comanche lands in 1902. His long army career included service in Texas, Philippine Islands and Northwestern United States; Mexican border patrol, 1917, and in the World War in four major engagements; he was wounded in action. He assisted, as attached to the U. S. Army General Staff, in developing the Army system of

adult education and soldier recreation.

While with the National Recreation Association he took part in a survey of park systems of the United States, made in 1925 and 1926. In his present work as Director of the Amateur Cinema League he has represented personal movie makers and helped develop the use of sub-standard picture film in various conferences, congressional hearings, etc. He has many club affiliations in New York City.

Col. Winton has been a member of the National Board's Better Films National Council since 1929 and has taken active part in several of the Board's annual conferences.

Developing Right Taste in Motion Pictures

By BISHOP FRANCIS J. MCCONNELL

Resident Bishop, New York Area, Methodist Episcopal Church

This address was delivered by Bishop McConnell, a member of the General Committee of the National Board, at the Board's 1934 annual luncheon.

I don't know that there is any particular thing that I can say to you. Certainly I haven't any suggestions to give as to your particular line of work. I do wonder sometimes if organizations like this really understand the importance of what they are doing even though they may take themselves very seriously. A very distinguished teacher came over from England a few years ago and gave a series of addresses at Swarthmore College on the Essentials of Democracy. That man was Principal Lindsey of Balliol College, Oxford University. He happens himself to be a Socialist. How he got in that position, being a Socialist, I don't know. Nevertheless, he came to this country to talk on Democracy and published a series of addresses that have said about all there is to say, I think, along certain lines. One thing was this: that Democracies, like those of the United States and Great Britain, are now so big that no one person can influence them much unless he has back of him a great mass of organized sentiment; and, on the other hand, you can't let these Democracies just attempt to find their own way alone. And then he said

that the only safety is to have organizations of common purpose, organizations that in a sense can be immortal in that they can live along from generation to generation, which take seriously the holding of the proper ideals before the public. He went on to say that the Labor groups, especially in England, had to do that, and that the scientific groups had to do it in order to get a scientific habit of thinking in the people; the Church had to do it, so far as certain moral ideas are concerned, and then there had to be other organizations that just simply looked to it to see that the proper ideals of taste and of beauty were held before the people. And I think that organizations like the National Board of Review, working through twenty-five years as you have done, have accomplished a very great work in that way. I have known, at least from the standpoint of one down in the seats, the motion picture industry, or its exhibits at least, from the beginning; and there has been a great change. It seems to me that a great work is being done on the right lines.

I think there are further fields to conquer than the ones we have been concerned with. Of course because of the clamor against what we call indecency in the films, we have paid a great deal of attention to

that. I hope some more definite work can be done in the way of setting out the proper kind of pictures to get rid not only of anything of immoral suggestion, but of just plain dumbness. One objection I have to the motion pictures is just this, that they are just dumb. I have a little granddaughter who, when she was five years old, became very much distressed at my facial appearance. She came to me one day and said, "Grandfather, smile a bit." And I did. Then she said, "Now that is about right." "But," she said, "some of the time your face is sad and the rest of the time just dumb." Well, one trouble with the screen is you see so many faces there that are just dumb. They are beautiful enough and all that, but I wish that more emphasis could be put in that direction, though there has been a great change for the better there.

And then, maybe one busy in the practical work of the world oughtn't to say this, but I wish we could get a higher order of pathos. I like to cry occasionally but I don't like to be made to cry in spite of myself. And to go to a show of some kind that isn't much anyhow and then just be caught in the contagion of the sniffing around and get to weeping, it is really very distressing.

And then, too, you have this very great task before you—and I think it really is a task you are performing wonderfully well—that in all this attempt to set forth the highest type of ideal from the standpoint of the sentiment of the day you are keeping in mind certain great human demands. Now if we get all these objectionable features out (you know we can do that and then not have anything much worth seeing left) what we have to do in that case is to make something positively worth while. Of course this organization is against censorship and so am I, and you lay your stress on selection and that is where it ought to be put—on a certain kind of selective understanding and discernment. And I don't know that there is any need of my saying this, because public demand comes up and asks for some things sometimes, but there are certain great human elements in pictures or in the dramatic art (put it that way) that sometimes we miss if we are not careful.

I remember back in my boyhood days, I

was about twelve years old, when *Huckleberry Finn* was published. I was then living in Indianapolis. *Huckleberry Finn* got into the Public Library there: but in a great many places it didn't, and my people didn't know anything about what it was. I got hold of the book and I was careful they didn't see it, but I had to read *Huckleberry Finn* around behind the barn. In those days it was looked upon as a glorified dime novel. I was familiar with some of the dime novels in those days and they were pretty good. And I have often thought that there has to be some way of carrying along the thing that is pretty good in those dime novels if you are going to carry along the rising generation of boys. It is being done pretty well in some ways, some not at all. There was a time when Stevenson's *Treasure Island* couldn't have gotten by. Youngsters are pretty callous anyhow. A good deal just falls off. They don't pay much attention sometimes. You can't always judge what people are going to do by what they read. I read a lot of detective stories, of stories about murders. I haven't felt any prompting to murder anybody because of those stories. The murderer always gets caught, maybe that is the reason. I don't know how you are going to do it, but there are certain great human elements that have to be kept if you are going to make it worth anything and of course you are doing the very best that you can do on that.

I had to deal with a youngster one time. An educational movie person came around to talk to me about ways of making pictures more educational. Well, the great thing about pictures of educational agencies is to learn something without knowing it. If you tell anybody that something is educational, it has a different effect. I don't want anybody to educate me. When I am told a picture is educational I get nervous, of course I have waited long enough to see, and it is a rather loose interpretation of the word "education" in a good deal of it. A woman came in to see me in regard to the boy I was interested in, who was about thirteen years old. She told me there ought to be lessons in zoology and botany put on the screen. She turned to him and said, "Don't you think educational features

would be good things in the movies?" He said, "I don't know. All I ask is a couple of good murders and a mystery."

The great advantage of the educational part of it is that you do arouse an interest and get something across when people don't suspect it is being put across. It is done in the form of a by-product but all along the line it is improving. It is due in large part to the organizational aspect of your work and what is finally gotten out all over the country.

Styles can change. Magazines changed the styles of women in all the country districts in the United States a few years ago and they did that in the short space of two or three years. If you put the right kind of pictures on and make the right kind of appeal, a perfectly legitimate appeal too, you can change the style of demand. Of course

it can't be done by fussiness or by getting finicky or anything of the kind, but it can be done. And the great thing, of course, is to keep the emphasis on the right track, upon the highest type of picture that can be obtained. People sometimes can't tell the difference between a good picture and a poor one. Let them have good pictures a while and they don't know why but they just don't want the other type.

But what I started out to say was just this—I really think your function in a country like ours is much profounder than you think; namely giving yourselves to the cultivation of the right kind of public taste, a taste that simply won't come of itself. You can wait forever. It won't come unless somebody takes hold of it to do something about it and as I have tried to indicate, in this principle of selection, it seems to me that you are entirely on the right path.

How the Industry Has Tried to Meet the Public Demand for Superior Motion Pictures

By JOHN F. BARRY, *Paramount Pictures*

An address given by Mr. Barry at the special anniversary conference of the National Board this year.

YOUR organization has made a splendid contribution to the welfare of the motion picture. You have given practical and important and unselfish assistance to the producer, the distributor, and the exhibitor of motion pictures, but particularly to the millions of our people who find in the motion picture the recreation and education which permits them to lead fuller and happier lives. The expression of thanks and appreciation to your organization must be large indeed to cover all that you have done during the past twenty-five years.

Twenty-five years ago your organization was responsible for averting a restraint which might have strangled, before it had a chance to live, an agency of great potential good and a new medium of expression. You believed in liberty. You were broad-minded enough to be patient and to encour-

age honest effort, and you had confidence in people generally and you felt that they wanted to be better and that they were naturally good and that God made them that way. You believed that the public taste would improve and that the motion picture would improve under the proper encouragement. And it was that type of encouragement that you have given. Your belief has been eloquently justified by the improvement that we have all seen in the twenty-five years of your organization's work. You have helped the motion picture for twenty-five years and you have helped public taste for that time. This interest in the welfare of the motion picture would require a much more eloquent tribute than I can pay. That tribute you find strikingly given if you look back over what has happened during the twenty-five years. No one, no matter how bigoted, no matter how prejudiced, no matter how biased, could possibly deny that there has been an unbelievable improvement and you are in good part responsible for that improvement.

You want better motion pictures. That sums it all up. That sums up the long trip you have made here and it sums up the hours that you have given to discussion here. You want better motion pictures. The producer wants to make better motion pictures. Why? I wish to leave with you a simple and convincing answer to that question of why the producer wants to make better pictures. Is it because of ideals? Because of conscience? Because of cultural aspirations? Because of interest in general social betterment? Perhaps. But I want to give you an answer to that question that will be so positively convincing that there will be no question in anybody's mind as to its conclusiveness. The producer is a business man whose decisions are based on business reason. So here is the answer to the question does the producer want to make better pictures. It is good business to make better pictures. And there are two reasons why.

1. With every better picture a new quota of patrons who have avoided the motion picture entirely come into the fold.

2. Better pictures improve public taste and this is good business for the producer. Why is it good business for the producer to improve public taste? If public taste did not improve and the producer were forced to cater to the lowest type of taste, he would soon run out of material. If the producer were making pictures for savages, he could only produce within narrow limits and there would be such a monotony of production that even the savage would lose his interest. As public taste improves, wider limits of photoplay entertainment are opened up to the producer and thus his possibilities for revenue are increased.

This is the fair and common sense answer to why the producer wants to make better pictures. Strangely enough the producers who were not smart enough to apply all this have passed out of the motion picture industry. The companies that have thrived and prospered are those that have constantly kept pace with the improvement in public taste. You need only review the improvement in motion pictures of the last few years to have sufficient proof of this.

Paramount has always been a pioneer in this regard and to you who are so familiar

with motion pictures the mere mention of the following titles of Paramount productions will serve as a timely reminder—*Cradle Song, Sign of the Cross, Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, Grass, The Virginian, With Byrd at the South Pole, Beau Geste, The Covered Wagon, Old Ironsides, The Ten Commandments, Rough Riders, The Wedding March, The Patriot, Kiss For Cinderella, Peter Pan*. Can you tell me that any company which is responsible for these productions is not keenly aware of the fact that it is good business to make better pictures, because as better pictures are made, public taste will improve and it is good business to strive in every way for the improvement of public taste. And this can only be brought about through the efforts of your organization and through the efforts of the producers to constantly produce better pictures.

We do not say that every picture that has ever been made measures up to the standards which are summed up in the words, "Better Pictures." But I do say that there is a constant, unceasing effort to make better pictures. I have listed only those pictures made by Paramount. I could go right on naming pictures from other companies and I do believe that if we all sat back and faced the better pictures that have been made over the last twenty-five years we would have convincing proof that the producers themselves realize it is good business to make better pictures.

May I leave with you just two thoughts as far as the future is concerned? Your activity in bringing to the attention of far-scattered communities important details about better pictures which are soon to be released is one of the most important influences in helping the motion picture. Let me tell you why as a theatre manager, running a theatre in some small town of five thousand or even in a metropolitan city, would tell you if he stood where I stand. The theatre manager's avenues of reaching his community are definitely limited. He has his trailers on the screen, his lobby announcements, his newspaper ads and his billboards. And you know as well as I know that you cannot tell a far-flung community all that you would care to tell them about a good picture within that limited

space. Therefore the theatre managers of the country are asking for some such agency as yours to bring believable information about good pictures to the people of their community, because they are hoping in their hearts that all the people of their community will know about a better picture before it is too late. The machinery which you have set up to advise your organizations in different communities about coming attractions will, I believe, as the years go on, have more to do with the improvement in public taste and with the encouragement of better pictures than anything else, because all of us agree if everyone interested in a better picture could be told about it far enough in advance to make arrangements to catch it at the local theatre there would be a greater response to the better pictures. And remember this—twelve thousand theatre managers of the country are reporting audience reactions to the producers. If the audience reaction to the better picture surpasses every expectation, you may be sure that the producer, who is a business man, will be influenced more by that public reaction than anything else. And it is organizations like the National Board that can help to influence that public reaction as nothing else can.

So, then, as a representative of theatre managers, of 12,000 men who might come here and say, "Do something to help us get better pictures," I say this to you; the more you do to make your community aware of the better pictures that are coming, the more you do to accomplish your objective; namely, to get better pictures on the screen.

Secondly, may I leave this thought with you. Would it be possible to have in our schools and colleges courses on the appreciation of the photoplay? May I quote from a recent bulletin that I found on my desk the other evening?: "If our millions of high school students can be taught standards for judging motion pictures, it is likely that a movement to make boys and girls intelligently critical of current photoplays would succeed in raising the level of taste among the rising generation of motion picture-goers. Mass education in this field would be likely to mean not only an advance in the work of modernizing the English curricula but also, perhaps, a slight advance

along the entire frontier of human thought and discussion."

Not long ago I asked a high school youngster how he liked a certain photoplay. He groped for an answer. I could almost sense that he was feeling for some principles to apply to what he had just seen. If someone asked him why he liked Lorna Doone or why he liked any classic, any work of Dickens or Thackeray and so on down the line, he would have been able to apply certain principles that were taught him in the English class. Now why can we not have a more intelligent and a fuller appreciation of a new medium of expression which today is studded with classics just as worthy of study and appreciation as are the classics of literature? Imagine what it would mean to the approximation of your objective for better photoplays if throughout the country students in high school and college were taught how to appreciate the photoplay. Then when you asked a high school or a college man what he thought of a picture, he wouldn't say, "It was swell," "It was grand," "It was fine" and let it go at that.

At Columbia University Mrs. Frances Taylor Patterson has been for some years conducting a course in photoplay writing which in my opinion has done more good for an intelligent appreciation of the principles of photoplay construction and appreciation than anything that I have come across as far as collegiate cinema work is concerned. If we could get someone like Mrs. Patterson to outline a course in the appreciation of the photoplay, in how many high schools and colleges would we find teachers who are up to the minute and who realize that their pupils want to know more about the photoplay than they do about a dust worn classic, how many teachers would we find developing in students an appreciation of the better pictures? So if you can go back to your communities and encourage the institution of some such course, I really do feel that in the years to come you will find in that activity something that will continue the fine force that you have brought to bear over the past twenty-five years.

I consider it a pleasure to come here. I

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Viva Villa

Suggested by the book by Edgcomb Pinchon and O. B. Stade, screen play by Ben Hecht, directed by Jack Conway, photographed by James Howe and Charles Clarke, produced by David O. Selznick, distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Pancho Villa | Wallace Beery |
| Madero | Henry B. Walthall |
| Sierra | Leo Carrillo |
| Johnny | Stuart Erwin |
| Teresa | Fay Wray |
| Don Felipe | Donald Cook |
| General Pascal | Joseph Schildkraut |
| Emilio Chavito | George E. Stone |
| Rosita | Katherine De Mille |
| Pancho Villa the boy | Phillip Cooper |
| Bugler Boy | David Durand |
| Mendoza Printers | { Adrian Rosley |
| | { Henry Armetta |

LEGEND, rather than fact, is served by this film, and served with the same vividness and simplicity with which the ballads and folk-tales have kept alive the story of Robin Hood. If its hero and setting were not so near our own time, tempting us to scrutinize it with more than the usual critical eye, it would be easier to judge it for what it is—a plain adventure tale, with such a tale's inevitable kind of thrills and frills, built around a good-bad man. In America, the home of the perennial Western, familiarity with the general pattern is apt to obscure the fact that in this case the pattern is woven with more than the usual skill, out of threads that have plenty of the hue of truly heroic romance in them.

The film pictures a Pancho Villa oppressed as a boy and growing up to become a cruel champion of the peons. From a bandit something in the character or personality

of Madero changed him into a true Revolutionary. When he had avenged Madero's assassination and returned the peons' lands to them his work was done, though the drama carries him on to a death from the bullet of a personal enemy.

Into this life-story a good deal of commonplace incident has been inserted—some of the comedy ranks pretty low in the scale of humor, and some of the official uniforms cover nothing but the stock stuffed-shirts of melodrama. But two actors give it a soul and a vigorous life—Wallace Beery and Henry B. Walthall. They wipe out the memory of the Joseph Schildkrauts and Fay Wrays and other nonentities who fill up so much of the background.

We have seen Wallace Beery so often, always more or less the same, often in pictures that are pure trash, that it is something of a surprise on thinking it over to realize that here, with no different means than those we have watched for so many years, he carries the whole thing through by what must surely be called the art of acting. Looking like Min's Bill and Tugboat Annie's twin-brother-to-Bill, with many of their easy mannerisms, he is nevertheless Pancho Villa. Back of the bad-boyishness, the childishness that often seems close to sheer bestial idiocy, there is a dignity and loyalty that remain one's final memory of the character.

This is helped—made credible—by what Henry B. Walthall makes of the part of Madero, the man who inspired Villa's dignity and loyalty. Here is a picture of real nobility—and if the film had nothing else to praise in it it would be satisfying for the chance it gives this fine and almost forgotten



Wallace Beery in one of the more quiet moments of "Viva Villa".

actor to show that what we used to think of him is still true.

With the characters of these two men to give it meaning, the sweep of the story becomes really stirring—something more than the usual Western melodrama with which the film is so closely allied.—J. S. H.

Four French Shorts

IN the light of the film industry's concern over such matters as the spread of the double-feature policy and the difficulty of filling out programs with interesting shorts, it is curious to note an instance where the shorts literally stole the show. There have been a number of private showings in New York of French films which constitute the average diet of the French picturegoer. The features themselves are no better than average, serving only to

emphasize the extraordinary gap which still exists between René Clair and most of his countrymen. But one had the unusual pleasure of seeing shorts which received, and merited, more applause than the full-length pictures.

These shorts fall in what we usually call the travelogue class, they are all the work of the same organization, and one of them is at least the equal of the best ever produced in America. Unlike Hollywood, the French have not travelled far for their travelogues. Two of them are concerned with Paris, one, *Les Pompiers de Paris*, dealing with the duties, equipment and drills of the firemen of Paris, the other, *Le Vrai Paris*, being a lively and tuneful excursion about the city, with the account of the reporter occasionally giving place to a bit of song-chanting in the best Parisian manner. *Images d'Auvergne* is more along the familiar lines of the best American series, the

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"No Greater Glory"-What Say the Juniors?

SHALL we have War or Peace?—this question the cause of very recent discussions and demonstrations in colleges and universities is just as absorbing it seems to grammar and high school boys and girls. The film *No Greater Glory* shown, through the interested cooperation of Columbia Pictures Corporation, the producers, to two groups of the Young Reviewers Club, organized by the National Board two years ago, aroused heated discussion which disclosed very decided and well thought-out ideas on the subject.

The picture, adapted from Ferenc Molnar's "The Paul Street Boys" tells of two gangs of boys in Budapest during the present day, organized by themselves in strict military style—one attempting to gain from the other a deserted lumberyard for their meeting place and games. Their war is planned and carried out with army precision but ends with the death of one of the boys, due to his fanatical devotion to the cause, and the destruction of the lot for the erection of an apartment house.

The first Young Reviewers group which viewed this picture ranged in age from 11 to 15 years and the second from 8 to 10 years. These children are average boys and girls—from wealthy, poor and middle-class families. There are no special qualifications for membership except the age limit and the consent of the parents. The discussions are entirely informal and, as can be seen from the quotations to follow, the boys and girls feel perfectly free to express their own honest opinions.

Both groups were tremendously interested and moved by the picture and had very definite ideas as to its meaning and message. They were both unanimous in their vote that it was an exceptional picture and far above the average. Taking the older group first, the opening comment was made by a girl of 15 who said, "I think the end of it is to show the uselessness of war—after they had had their war there was going to be an apartment house on the lot. It is symbolical in tone. I think it is sup-

posed to bring to younger children's minds more clearly this idea." Another girl of 12 agreed: "I think it is meant as an example of what nations do. It shows that nobody got anything in the end." A boy of 14 added to this with: "I think that is the way that nations do act. Before there is a war a lot of people say that we should fight for our country but then when the war is over and they are sorry about the dead and decide to never have another war; then it all starts all over again." To the question—"was the picture in your estimation for or against war?" all but one thought it was against war and to a further question "are you in favor of war?" there was only one affirmative, a girl. A boy added to his "no," by saying that he thought "it was right to have adequate defense," and another, of 11, that he believed it "right to be prepared for war but not to declare war for no good reason." Ten were not in favor of war for any reason and the rest favored wars of defense (there were 47 members present). A young man added to his vote by saying, "if a fellow would hit me, I'd hit him back." To the question "If your country went to war and you did not think it was right would you still fight for your country?" Six said they would. But a girl of 12 wanted to know if one was not forced into going, so this brought up the question of how many would go to prison before they would fight for a cause they did not believe in and 28 preferred stone walls to battlefields. A boy of 13 concluded that: "if no one had to go to war if they didn't have to, there wouldn't be any war" but another of the same age answered him with: "everybody doesn't think the same." A boy of 12 said: "Who runs the war? A lot of bankers. A man goes out and loses his life and the steel manufacturers are home making profits and they don't go to war and the other man gets killed." There were quite a few suggestions of arbitration and it was generally agreed that wars resulted from empire-building aspirations.

This older group agreed that the picture

was grand for all ages and that it would be especially thought-provoking to grown-ups. One young lady of 15 however, thought it was too subtle for children—that they would not understand it so well. So the youngsters will speak for themselves.

When the lights went up there were many audible expressions of "it was wonderful," "it was swell," et cetera, from the group of 25 younger children. A girl of 10 made the first remark, which was, "The picture shows patriotism and that everyone should be as loyal as Nemeschek" (the little boy who died for his loyalty). But a boy of 10 said, "It teaches that war isn't very wise," and a boy of 9 agreed with him with "It shows that when people have war, many are killed but it is for nothing." A little girl of 9 opined, "the poor people work during the war and the rich people just laze around" (Nemeschek was obviously the poorest boy in his group). Many agreed that they would have to decide for themselves if the cause was right or wrong and that if it was right they would go to war. However, all causes aside, 5 would fight right or wrong.

To the question: "How many would like to organize or belong to clubs of the sort pictured?" there were some leading answers. Among them: "I wouldn't want to belong, someone might get hurt," "Big boys would come along and break it up and then the others wouldn't join," "I wouldn't start a club because it isn't much good in a city. You can't have much fun. You have no place to meet or play." This last statement might give some food for thought to those who are constantly blaming all juvenile ills on the motion picture. Here is another reason from a boy of 10: "I wouldn't join a gang. I don't like it—suppose you broke a window and a cop got you. You would get squealed on." One, however, felt the lure of power or empire-building, "I might like such a club if I could be head of it."

Taking both groups as a whole Nemeschek was the favorite character and the concerted opinion was that the picture was excellent fare for all ages. Incidentally the younger group did not object acknowledging that to a man they wept copiously during the film, while there were 16 of the older group who would admit to no tears.

At one of the National Board's Young Reviewers meetings, a father who accompanied his small daughter and son but who stayed well out of sight, as no adults are present during the discussion, remarked that he was "surprised and gratified at the sensible and serious remarks made by the children." It will be heartening to other parents to know how well defined their children's opinions are, showing that they are not easily swayed by everything they see and hear but apply intelligence and common sense to things that are presented to them.

Another survey was conducted on this same film in the schools of Washington, D. C., under the direction of Stephen E. Kramer, First Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Kramer writes that they selected groups of children from various levels and after the showing of the picture had them interviewed by some members of the staff of their Research Department. "We had," he says, "interesting reactions from the children."

Here are some of the results of that survey made up by representatives of Columbia Pictures and Washington teachers under the direction of Jessie La Salle, Assistant Superintendent, specializing in educational research.

Of twelve children of the elementary schools who filed written answers to a questionnaire two (both boys) replied to the question "what, if anything, does the film teach," that war is useless. Three replied that it taught boys to be brave; one to have more spirit. One, a girl of 13, to defend right against wrong; a girl of 10 that it taught one to stand up for his country. Another girl, 12, replied that it taught "If you are a coward you do not come out on top"; another of the same age said that its message was to obey your parents. Of the group only three suggested that the picture made them want to do something—one to join the army or navy in event of war to help defend his country; another to do something good for somebody, as the hero did, and the third to organize a club similar to the one shown in the picture. All—and this was equally true of the older students—expressed abhorrence of the spy, who recanted. There was considerable difference of opinion expressed over whether

he should have been forgiven, as described by Molnar, nearly as many holding that he should have been punished as those who agreed with the author. Of forty of all ages, all held that the little hero did right in lying to the spy's father to protect him from discipline. Many reasons were advanced to support this view, the majority holding that it afforded him opportunity to reform; others that it proved the hero's nobility of soul, and some of the older students maintaining that had the guilty boy been exposed he would have been branded for life.

Fourteen written questions were submitted to the boys and girls and answered by number, in addition to oral examinations along the same line for others, and essays from still others. The latter were especially illuminating. Perhaps the most amazing disclosure was that children prefer their film entertainment at the hands of adult actors and are not interested in juvenile performers unless they have something of unusual merit to offer—a situation diametrically opposed to the long-held belief in Hollywood that youngsters have special appeal to juvenile audiences.

The similarity of results from these two researches conducted under entirely different auspices offers convincing proof that the young people have not been directed but have been free to give a frank expression of their opinions and reactions on this picture and the thought-provoking theory it advances.

Perhaps from these surveys those persons, well-intentioned but lacking in understanding, who have considered only the wholesomeness and juvenility of films in arranging programs for young people may be awakened to the mistakes they have made and find an answer to why their junior shows have not been as successful as they expected. And too here may be an incentive for those Better Films Councils conducting junior activity to arrange a local showing to see how their young people react to this film in comparison with the youthful citizenry of Washington and New York.



Four French Shorts

(Continued from page 10)

Magic Carpet shorts. It is a tour of one of the French provinces, interesting for the views it presents of towns rarely seen by either tourists or moviegoers.

The short which won the most prolonged and enthusiastic applause was *La Terre Soumise*. Fascinating in subject-matter and in photography, it tells the story of the building of a huge dam, showing the site, the construction work at different stages, the life of the workers on and off duty, and the infinite amount of underground detail connected with the power plants. The scene which shows the blowing-out of the side of a hill exceeds in power and excitement any of the similar scenes taken at Boulder Dam for the newsreels. The power plant building, white and very modern, broken only by long window spaces, is in itself a fascinating subject for the camera, but it is for the organization and photography of a wealth of material that *La Terre Soumise* is notable.

The beauty and interest of this film, and the skill with which it has been planned and photographed, make it a worthwhile one for American audiences. Although the commentary is in French, it is likely that an English one will be substituted in this country. The sound effects themselves are separate from the commentary, so that it will be possible to preserve them in any new version. All four of the films mentioned were produced and directed by J. C. Bernard and photographed by Maurice Thery. Information about them can be secured from John S. Tapernoux, 130 West 46th Street, New York City.—J. A. T.

Meeting the Public Demand

(Continued from page 8)

feel that the industry—producers and distributors and exhibitors—owe you real gratitude and real appreciation for what you have tried to do. And I want to tell you sincerely that because it is good business every broad-visioned, wide-awake and intelligent producer, distributor and exhibitor is anxious to further the work that you have given yourselves to so unselfishly; namely, to have better pictures and thereby improve public taste.

***TARZAN AND HIS MATE**—*Johnny Weismuller and Maureen O'Sullivan. From novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A sequel to *Tarzan the Ape-man* with much the same cast. After a draggy beginning it swings into a rip-snorting adventure story, built around an attempt to rob an elephant graveyard of its ivory. Many exciting incidents, some a bit gory, and some remarkable animal acting. *Family.*

TWENTY MILLION SWEETHEARTS—*Pat O'Brien, Dick Powell and Ginger Rogers. First National.* The success story of a radio crooner, showing some of the inner workings of radioland and some radio stars. Lively entertainment for Dick Powell fans. *Family.*

UNCERTAIN LADY—*Genevieve Tobin and Edward Everett Horton. From play by Harry Segall. Universal.* A little slow but on the whole interesting picture concerned with a wife who consents to leave her husband so he can marry another woman if they will provide a husband for her. *Mature.*

***VIVA VILLA**—*Wallace Beery, Leo Carrillo and Stuart Erwin. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family.* See page 9.

VOICE IN THE NIGHT—*Tim McCoy and Billie Seward. Columbia.* Interesting story of the telephone men who must at all costs keep the service always open. The son of the president of one telephone company joins the forces of a rival company to help fight their battles. *Family.*

WE'RE NOT DRESSING—*Bing Crosby and Carole Lombard. Paramount.* An amusing and smooth-running comedy with Bing Crosby singing many new hits. The scenes are laid on a yacht and a desert island. George Burns and Gracie Allen are most amusing, likewise Leon Errol and Ethel Merman. "Droopy" the bear also does her bit with amusing antics. *Family. Junior matinee.*

WHERE SINNERS MEET—*Diana Wynyard and Clive Brook. From the play "Dover Road" by A. A. Milne. RKO.* An amusing story of a wealthy man who lives on the road to Dover and from this strategic point kidnaps eloping couples and keeping them prisoners in his house for a week proves whether they are making a mistake or not. A unique story excellently acted. *Mature.*

WHIRLPOOL—*Jack Holt, Jean Arthur and Lila Lee. Columbia.* Dramatic story about a man who goes to prison for twenty years, and spends one happy week with his daughter who he has never seen before. His wife believing him dead had remarried but he and his daughter keep their secret. *Family.*

WITCHING HOUR, THE—*Judith Allen and Tom Brown. From play by Augustus Thomas. Paramount.* An interesting subject well handled and excellently acted in which a hypnotist hypnotizes his future son-in-law who kills a man without being aware of it. At the trial the hypnotist is laughed to scorn when he tries to convince the jury the boy is innocent but he proves his point in an unexpected manner. *Mature.*

FOREIGN PRODUCTIONS

ARIANE—*Elizabeth Bergner. From novel by Claude Auet. Blue Ribbon Photoplays.* British production. The story of a young girl's love for an older man, her first love. A sensitive study of passion, beautifully acted by Elizabeth Bergner. *Mature.*

ASTERO—*Angelo Rotzairon.* A silent film, with Greek and English subtitles. The story, of an orphan girl cheated of her inheritance and finally finding happiness after much suffering, is very like the earliest American films. The background of Greek hills and pastures give it some novelty. *Family.*

ATHENS—*Angelo Rotzairon.* A one reel Greek newsreel—Olympic games and ceremonies and views of Athens. *Family.*

C'EST EN FLANNANT DANS PARIS—*Maurice Chevalier and Jacqueline Francell. Paramount.* A French version of *The Way to Love*, a romance of Paris with Chevalier in a gay and attractive role, with several songs to sing. *Family.*

CROWN OF THORNS—*Werner Kraus, Asta Nielsen and Henry Porten. Kinematrade.* German production. A dignified and devout picture of Christ's life and passion—silent film with suitable music and an off-screen voice supplying the narrative in English. Suggested for church use. *Family.*

FIN DU MONDE, LE (End of the Wor'd)—*Victor Francen, Harold Auten.* A story of what might happen if a great comet were headed for the earth, threatening its destruction. In French, with English superimposed titles. *Family.*

GRANADEROS DEL AMOR (Masquerade)—*Raul Roulien and Conchita Montenegro. Fox.* An attractive singing romance in Spanish, in which an excursion into the picturesque past of an old Tyrolean castle supplies a young playwright with material for an operetta. The cast is particularly good, and the production a handsome one. *Family.*

HALSINGAR (People of Helsingland)—*Hulda Caslegren. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.* An old Swedish folk-play filmed in the Helsingland district with all its native customs and costumes. A leisurely story of a wild youth who left trouble in his path, until years and settling down brought final happiness to him and his family. With Swedish dialogue, but charming and interesting even for those who do not understand the language. *Family.*

HEIDESCHULMEISTER UWE KARSTEN (The Country School Teacher—Uwe Karsten)—*Hans Schlenck. Ufa.* German production. Lovely outdoor settings give additional charm to this story of a man's love for his native countryside and how it complicated his love for a girl. Charming singing and dancing enliven the film. *Family.*

***HELL ON EARTH (Niemandsländ)**—*Ernst Busch, Georges Peckel, Wladimir Sokoloff, Hugh and Louis Douglas. Amity.* German

production with English comment. The most persuasive film against war that has been made—it tells of an Englishman, a German, a Jewish tailor, a Frenchman and a negro who take refuge in a shell-hole during the World War. Life becomes for these five men the simple desperate problem of keeping alive—these five who have become brothers must either cease to be brothers and fight again or band together against their countries. It has great cinematic rarity—the quality of being unforgettable. An exceptional picture. *Family*.

MED UTTERN TILL FJALLS (With Utterstrom in the Mountains)—*Scandinavian Talking Pictures*. A one reel Swedish picture showing Utterstrom, the world skiing champion, giving an exhibition of his skill. *Family*.

***MENSCHEN OHNE NAMEN** (Man Without a Name)—*Werner Kraus, Maria Bard and Hertha Thiele, Ufa*. The poignant story of a man lost in the war who comes back unable to establish his identity—his family and business lost to him. Superbly acted, it escapes the depressing quality that such a theme might easily emphasize, and ends cheerfully. *Family*.

MIDSOMMAR IN HALSINGLAND (Midsummer in Helsingland)—*Scandinavian Talking Pictures*. A picturesque two reel record of summer customs in Helsingland, including a wedding. Musical accompaniment with subtitles in Swedish. *Family*.

STERN VON VALENCIA, DER (The Star of Valencia)—*Liana Haid, Ufa*. A picturesque melodrama of kidnapping a crowd of girls on the Spanish coast. A good deal of interesting atmosphere and action. *Family*.

TANNENBERG—*Karl Koerner and Harry Pless, European Film Exchange*. An effective recreation of the battle for which Von Hindenburg was called from retirement to defeat the Russians. Coming before the days of trench warfare it is strikingly different from most war films. Naturally it glorifies the German military power. German dialogue. *Mature*.

TATRA'S ZAUBER—*Proter*. A picturesque story of the mountainous region in Czechoslovakia, made largely with native mountaineers for actors. The plot concerns the efforts of the natives to keep their mountains free from tourist exploitation, and contains some thrilling mountain climbing. German dialogue. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*.

TOCHTER DES REGIMENTS, DIE (The Daughter of the Regiment)—*Anny Ondra, From operetta by Kurt Lewinnek, General Foreign*. A charming German light operetta, in which Mrs. Max Schmeling plays the gay part of a girl found as an infant on a battlefield and adopted by a Highland regiment. The tunes are not particularly outstanding, but the cast is excellent and the comedy generally amusing. *Family*.

TRENCK—*Dorothea Wieck and Hans Stueve, General Foreign*. A handsome historical picture of Prussia in the time of Frederick the Great, and the tragic romance of the king's sister and his favorite young officer. Entirely in German. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Mature*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

INFORMATIONALS

***BOSOM FRIENDS**—*Educational*. Unusual picture of strange friendships among animals. *Family, Junior matinee*.

***FORTUNATE ISLES** (Magic Carpet)—*Fox*. The Canary Islands. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family, Junior matinee*.

IN JAVA SEA (Magic Carpet)—*Fox, Family*.

***LAND OF BENGAL** (Magic Carpet)—*Fox*. Calcutta from dawn to eve. *Family*.

***LOST RACE, THE** (Romantic Journey)—*Educational*. Beautiful scenes of Zion National Park in Utah. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available. *Family, Junior matinee*.

MADEIRA, THE LAND OF WINE (Vagahond Adventures)—*RKO, Family*.

MARCH OF THE YEARS NO. 8—*Columbia*. Evolution of the Iron Horse; old-fashioned and modern bicycle racing etc. *Family*.

MARINE MARVELS (Sportlight)—*Paramount*. Marvelous swimming and diving; worth being kept permanently available. *Family, Junior matinee*.

MEDBURY IN INDIA—*Columbia, Family*.

PAGLIACCI—*Educational*. A bit of the opera done with cinema actors and singing by opera stars off-stage. Henry Hull has the leading role. *Family*.

PATHE REVIEW NO. 4—*RKO*. Sigmund Spaeth; microscopic views of house fly's eye; etc. *Family*.

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 10—*Paramount*. Auto races in 1909; stars of yesterday; etc. *Family*.

TIBET, LAND OF ISOLATION (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Family*.

CARTOONS

BUDDY'S GARAGE (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone, Family*.

EUSY BUS (Krazy Kat)—*Columbia, Junior matinee*.

CAN YOU TAKE IT? (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount, Family*.

JOE'S LUNCH WAGON (Terrytoon)—*Educational, Family, Junior matinee*.

KING'S DAUGHTER, THE (Terrytoon)—*Educational, Family*.

ONLY A CLOWN (Terrytoon)—*Educational, Family*.

THOSE WERE WONDERFUL DAYS (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone, Family*.

WOLF WOLF (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal, Family, Junior matinee*.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS

COUNT, THE—*RKO, 2 reels*. A re-issue of the Charlie Chaplin comedy. *Family, Junior matinee*.

FOR PETE'S SAKE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels*. Our Gang, with some promising new recruits, gets a doll for a sick little girl. *Family, Junior matinee*.

LITTLE JACK LITTLE REVUE—*Paramount*. Little and his orchestra. *Family*.

LOST JUNGLE, THE (serial)—*Mascot, 2 reels each*. No. 2—*Nature in the Raw*, No. 3—*The Hypnotic Eye*, No. 4—*The Pit of Crocodiles*, No. 5—*Gorilla Warfare*—Clyde Beatty and his animals continue to hold the interest in this serial. *Family, Junior matinee*.

ROAMIN' VANDALS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels*. The comic misadventures of a troupe of patent medicine vendors. *Family*.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 7—*Columbia*. Hollywood stars on a golf course; at a party, etc. *Family*.

STORY CONFERENCE—*Vitaphone, 2 reels*. Miniature musical show featuring Lillian Roth. *Family*.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 39—*Universal*. Strange events and things in many lands. *Family, Junior matinee*.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. IX, No. 6



June, 1934



The Supporting Church
Interest in Community
Motion Picture
Organization

Motion Picture Review – How
It Should Function to
Reflect Public Preference

Pictures of Half a Year

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

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\$2.00 a year

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*AFFAIRS OF CELLINI, THE — *Fredric March, Constance Bennett and Frank Morgan. From play "The Firebrand" by Edwin Justus Mayer. United Artists.* Romantic comedy of intrigue against the background of Renaissance Florence—the complications evolving from the flirtations of the Duke and Duchess. Handsomely done, cleverly directed and amusing. *Mature.*

BLACK CAT, THE—*Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and David Manners. Universal.* Horror story which has little or nothing to do with the Edgar Allen Poe story which suggests it. A man returns after eighteen years to avenge his wife's murder, only to find that the murderer in the meantime has married his daughter. It holds the interest. *Mature.*

*BULLDOG DRUMMOND STRIKES BACK *Ronald Colman and Loretta Young. From novel by H. C. McNeile. United Artists.* The adventures of a foggy night in London—Drummond against sinister orientals—wild melodrama, done with a dash and humor that turns its improbabilities into amusing entertainment. *Family.*

*CHANGE OF HEART—*Janet Gaynor, Charles Farrell, James Dunn and Ginger Rogers. From novel "Manhattan Love Song" by Kathleen Norris. Fox.* A clean and pleasant story of a boy who started loving the wrong girl. Its atmosphere of young people making their way in New York is interesting, and the four stars all have parts that suit them admirably. *Family.*

CITY PARK—*Sally Blane and Henry B. Walthal. Chesterfield.* A simple story of three old men and the girl they befriended—unpretentious but interesting. *Family.*

CRIME OF HELEN STANLEY, THE—*Ralph Bellamy and Shirley Grey. Columbia.* A Hollywood murder mystery—a star is shot and killed on the set while dancing. Evidence is discovered on how the crime was committed by running the film in slow motion. The picture is well done and holds the interest. *Mature.*

DOUBLE DOOR—*Mary Morris, Evelyn Venable and Kent Taylor. From play by Elizabeth A. McFadden. Paramount.* An interesting story which follows the play from which it was adapted—a young girl marries a wealthy man and is forced to live in his unpleasant home with his half-mad sister. The story is really a good old melodrama with an excellent cast and is well directed. *Mature.*

EMBARRASSING MOMENTS—*Chester Morris and Marion Nixon. Universal.* An amusing story about a practical joker who gets into plenty of trouble when the tables are turned. *Family.*

FILM PARADE, THE—*General. J. Stuart Blackton* presents an interesting collection of bits from old movies, starting with a theory that even the Egyptians had an idea of moving pictures. There are some odd interpretations of history, but many old favorites of the early films appear briefly and fascinatingly. *Family.*

*FOG OVER FRISCO—*Bette Davis, Margaret Lindsay and Donald Woods. First National.* A fast and exciting melodrama, concerning a girl who is a pathological thief, and the crime and mystery in which she involved her family. An excellent example of motion picture construction of its type. *Family.*

GREEN EYES—*Charles Starrett, Shirley Grey and William Bakewell. From novel "The Murder of Steven Kester" by Harriet Ashbrook. Chesterfield.* An average murder mystery in which Charles Starrett plays an amateur detective very amusingly. A young girl's grandfather who seemed to have had only enemies, is murdered and before the criminal is discovered a few more murders occur. *Mature.*

HE WAS HER MAN—*James Cagney and Joan Blondell. Warner.* An entertaining picture in which a safe-cracker who was railroaded to prison by his "pals" pulls a fast one on them. Though a gangster picture there is little in it which really concerns crime. *Mature.*

HELL BENT FOR LOVE—*Tim McCoy. Columbia.* A fast moving picture, full of excitement, of a motorcycle policeman who, after being forced out of his job by an underworld gang that runs the city, works out a clever plan to defeat them. The title has nothing to do with the picture. *Family. Junior matinee.*

HELL CAT, THE—*Robert Armstrong and Ann Southern. Columbia.* A light comedy of a self-centered young newspaper man who is outwitted by one of the fair sex, whom he looks down upon. Having been the butt of a news-
(Continued on page 13)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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A Youthful Member Is Mourned

ONE of the comparatively recent and most valued enterprises of the National Board of Review is the work of junior review conducted under the Young Reviewers Club. The Young Reviewers Club has had as its president for the past three years, since its beginning, Walter C. Kaiser, who gave his enthusiasm and unselfish effort to this activity and so it is with a feeling of great regret and sorrow that the Board must record his death. He died on May 14th at the St. Johns University Hospital in Brooklyn New York.

Young Mr. Kaiser had graduated from New York University and was studying law. While pursuing his law studies he served as reporter on a newspaper in Brooklyn. But despite these two interests, he still found time to devote untiring effort to the work of the Young Reviewers Club. He had a keen appreciation of motion picture values and was particularly skillful at stimulating the discussion of the young reviewers so that they would freely

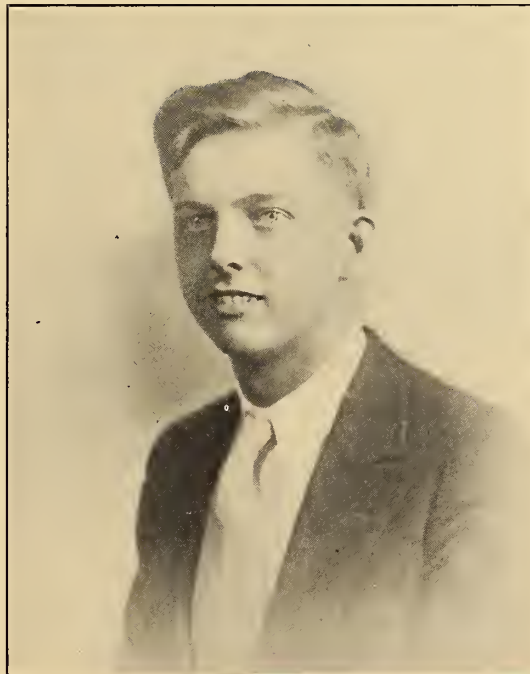
express their opinions and judgments both on ballots and verbally. He thus succeeded admirably in helping to accomplish the purpose of the Young Reviewers Club, which is to add value to the work of the National Board in picture review and audience classification by carefully

and accurately securing and recording the critical and discerning point of view of the youth of today.

With the death of Walter Kaiser, the Review Committee of the National Board loses a young and enthusiastic member, and the Young Reviewers Club an experienced and faithful leader.

Through his sympathetic encouragement he has led many a small boy and girl to dig out for themselves and put into words what the effect of a particular motion picture

has had on their thoughts and feelings, and so helped to create a critical faculty in some of the people who will be the audience of the future. No one can foresee what may grow from such an enthusiasm.



Walter C. Kaiser

By What Standards?

A Better Films Council recently organized in Tallahassee, Florida, will evidently find a local newspaper viewpoint in close agreement with its idea of selection not censorship, judging by an editorial which appeared in the Daily Democrat of that city. The editorial headed "About Moving Pictures and Moral Standards" says:

"Worthy efforts are being made by groups of citizens throughout the country to preserve a high moral standard in moving pictures. The most difficult step in such an endeavor is to agree upon a definition. This is true of all discussions. Agreement is not difficult for a small group, assembled because the individuals who are banded together think alike. The difficulty is in persuading the rest of the populace to accept that standard.

Many states have experimented with boards of censors. It has been observed that these boards do not agree. A portion of a certain film will be stricken in one state while in another that portion will be approved and another section eliminated. In general, standards are relative and change with custom.

Any one who has lived and observed customs of dress for as long as thirty years is well aware of this shifting in policy. Styles in dress which are now regarded as appropriate and even modest for Sunday school wear would have provoked gasps of shocked amazement twenty years ago.

Similarly things are discussed quite frankly and openly by adults today which were considered unmentionable in the days of our youth. One does not need to think back more than a quarter of a century to remember that women were presumed to have "limbs" which were never mentioned except with confusion, if necessary to advise that one had been fractured, that underwear was never spoken of under any circumstances, that beach attire was much more voluminous and concealing than the present day street or traveling dress.

Unquestionably, care should be exercised that tender sensibilities should not be shocked at the moving picture theatre. At the

same time, those who decide what is proper and what is not, must be persons in tune with the times who will judge on present day standards, not on those of the 'nineties.

A Judge Speaks for the Movies

A recent release of the Fox Movietone-news carried a sequence wherein Mrs. Richard M. McClure, Motion Picture Chairman of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, interviewed Judge Gausewitz of the Juvenile Court of Milwaukee. Those who missed it on the screen may find interest in it here as one more authoritative statement relieving the motion picture of all the blame of responsibility for juvenile delinquency, which it at times receives from less informed persons. We are sorry we can not produce the picture. The words are as follows:

Mrs. McClure: "At our meeting this morning, Judge Gausewitz, we were discussing the influence of motion pictures upon children. I wondered in your experience as judge in the Juvenile Court of Milwaukee, just what your opinion is of the influence of motion pictures upon children."

Judge Gausewitz: "The moving picture is one of the greatest mediums for entertainment and education of children. Movies have a definite, powerful, social value. The movies offer the child relaxation and relief from its youthful problems and troubles."

Mrs. McClure: "Have you ever observed any criminal tendencies in children, Judge, that might be attributed to motion pictures?"

Judge Gausewitz: "I have not. When a child shows what you call criminal tendencies, the causes are not to be found in the movies. On the contrary, when crime is shown in a movie, the picture generally shows that the villain is punished and his schemes are frustrated while the hero and his ideals are exalted and triumphant. The proper movie teaches the child the ideals of friendship and mother love and to care for parents in old age. In that way, the movie helps to build up the moral and spiritual life of the child."

The Supporting Church Interest in Community Motion Picture Organization

By DR. WORTH M. TIPPY

Dr. Tippy is Executive Secretary of the Department of the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of Churches and in this capacity he is directing the motion picture program being undertaken by the Council. Dr. Tippy is a member of the General Committee of the National Board of Review and this is the address which he delivered at the Board's Annual Conference.

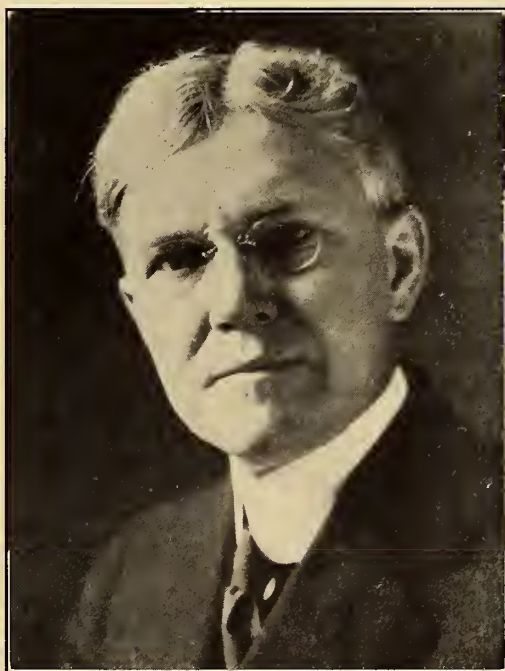
A widespread and expanding interest in motion pictures is being manifested in religious circles throughout the country. It is concerned as yet largely with the moral aspects of films, but there is a growing realization among religious leaders of the value of the motion picture for the purposes of religion and the very great importance of the commercial cinema for the leisure time and cultural development of the population. One recognizes also in religious circles a gratifying increase of appreciation of the motion picture in itself as a fascinating art of expression.

The Catholic Church has a national committee, appointed by the Hierarchy, under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Los Angeles, which is studying the policy of that communion toward motion pictures. The reviewing and broadcasting service of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, which has been carried on now for more than a decade, and which shows a real enthusiasm for the better photoplay, is well known to this Conference group.

The Protestant churches have been using motion pictures in their services and parish houses for many years, but without a definite policy. Several of the great church boards of religious education and missions have been producing pictures for their purposes, but Protestant action has largely taken the form of protest against the evils of the commercial cinema. The Catholic press has been equally critical.

I cannot of course forecast the future policy of the Catholic committee, of which Bishop John J. Cantwell is the chairman, but I can speak more definitely of Protestant policy since it heads up in the Commit-

tee on Motion Pictures of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. That Committee, which has been at work for over two years and which rests



Dr. Worth M. Tippy

back upon the church boards of religious education and social service, the National Council of Federated Church Women, councils of churches in cities, and important interchurch agencies, has issued a brochure or manual on Better Films Councils, which states the policy of the Federal Council's Committee.

Most important is its attitude towards the commercial cinema. It is stated briefly in the manual in the following words:

"The Federal Council's Committee on Motion Pictures should neither ask nor receive financial aid in any form from the industry. This is the only sound and self-

respecting policy for both the industry and organizations of the public.

"There is so much that is unreal and harmful in American films and their advertising and in the present conduct of the industry, that the church is tempted to become wholly critical. Nevertheless a merely negative attitude is unsound. There are splendid as well as degrading films, and the cinema in its large aspects is too important to be approached negatively.

"The spirit of the churches in their relations with the cinema should therefore be fundamentally constructive rather than fundamentally unfriendly and iconoclastic. This policy is necessitated by the fact that in the photoplay humanity has achieved an extraordinary new instrument of expression, with immense possibilities for broadening of knowledge and sympathies, for the pleasure of the whole people, for international understanding and appreciation, and for every kind of educational effort, including the purpose of religion.

"The motion picture is the people's theatre, and the public desire must be kept in mind. The freedom of the screen in its creative processes is related to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press. These rights are never unlimited but are always conditioned by public welfare and safety. The problem, as related to the commercial cinema, is to strike effectively at its deliberate degradation, to encourage the development of exceptional films and films for selected groups, to appreciate and applaud the finer achievements of producers, directors, writers, artists, technicians, and exhibitors, and to assist in elevating the public taste."

The objectives of these church better films groups, which the Federal Council is now organizing, were formulated out of a study of the work of existing Better Films Councils and their adjustment to the purposes and educational equipment of the churches. They are as follows:

To study the motion picture as an art of expression, and its value to entertainment, education, and religion.

To keep informed about research in the field of motion pictures, and to bring the findings of studies to the people of the churches.

To assist parents in their children's relations to motion pictures.

To collaborate with the local theatre manager on his programs.

To study the social control of the motion picture industry.

To study the use of motion pictures for religious purposes, and if found practicable to assist the minister and the church board in equipping the church for showing pictures, and in the education of the church for their proper use.

To organize a film club and amateur production when the situation within the church makes it possible and desirable.

To sponsor the organization of a community-wide better films council where there is none, and to participate actively in community better films councils.

The Federal Council's manual on Better Films Councils clearly contemplates the advisability of a community-wide better films council, resting back upon the organized and, therefore, articulate community, into which the church enters as a component group.

Three major types of community councils are appearing: councils formed by a single organization over which it keeps control; councils which are in the nature of film clubs or institutes, interested mainly in the art of the motion picture; film councils organized on a democratic basis and officially composed of representatives of delegates from educational, religious, civic, social welfare agencies, and societies of women of the community.

There is of course room for each type, but the Federal Council believes in the more democratic organization, which brings the organized community together for dealing with the local exhibitor and for the education of public taste. The Federal Council's manual suggests the kind of organization needed for a community better films council, and therefore has value to non-church groups. It recognizes that the local community should have freedom to do what is best after a survey has been made, and the need of broad-mindedness and mutual consideration if divergent groups are to work together.

The Federal Council's manual also recognizes that each organization entering into

the community council will have its own program in addition to what is done in common. Relations with the local exhibitor, for example, should clearly be left to the community-wide council, also the formulation of a film estimate service. The community-wide council can also best keep abreast of research. Such councils, due to divergent policies, may not be able to agree on social legislation, but they can leave their member organizations free. The churches are sure to be greatly concerned about securing cleaner commercial pictures both at the sources of production and in local theatres, and they can be counted upon to take a keen interest in problems of regulation of the industry from the point of view of the public interest. They will undoubtedly work at this separately when joint effort is not possible but joint action will be saner and stronger. The sphere of governmental control over all industries is expanding rapidly. It may be constructive, allowing the largest effective measure of self-government, or it can be negative and obstructive to the best development of the motion picture.

I feel strongly therefore that every Better Films Council should have a committee on social control or social legislation, to study local theatre ordinances, proposals for censorship, federal legislation, and the operation and development of the new motion picture Code as it affects the public welfare and the quality of pictures and theatre programs. Proposals for establishing state and city boards of censors and for congressional legislation are constantly being brought forward, many of them ill-advised. They should be studied carefully by a responsible group such as a Better Films Council, and its reasoned opinion given to legislators and to the public.

The Federal Council's Committee advises the formation of motion picture committees in local churches, and the creation of community-wide committees of the Protestant churches. It points out that these committees can then cooperate with Catholic and Jewish organizations as is now being done in Cleveland and with community-wide better films councils where they exist. These committees in local churches are asked to organize study groups, to make contacts with parents, to help them with their chil-

Audience Reactions to be gathered by M.P.T.O.A.

AT the annual 1934 convention of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America certain matters of real interest to the picture public were discussed and a plan of action outlined.

The president of the organization, Mr. Ed Kuykendall, tells us that a complete understanding with the producers was secured during the convention. Discussion was given to the subject of what is good and what is bad taste in motion pictures. And as a result of this Mr. Kuykendall is appointing outstanding theatre owners or managers geographically scattered throughout the United States to report to the national headquarters of the organization in New York, audience reactions to pictures and sentiment generally as to certain kinds and classes of pictures. This information will be compiled in New York and forwarded to producers in Hollywood.

Mr. Kuykendall makes a statement in regard to the public's part in motion pictures which will appeal to our readers and particularly those engaged in community better films activity. He says "We are deeply interested in the fine cooperation and worthwhile efforts of the Better Films Councils. Your organization is doing splendid work along sincerely constructive lines and it is cooperation of this kind that is going to enable the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America to accomplish those things for which they are fighting."

This attitude on the part of the theatre men should act as an incentive to groups to do any praising and criticising of motion picture programs not among themselves but to do it where it counts, to the manager who will in turn pass it on to bring results.

dren in relation to theatre attendance, to help the people of the church to learn to judge pictures, and to shop for good ones. It is proposed also to organize film clubs for the study and amateur production of pictures. An arrangement has been reached

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Motion Picture Review - How It Should Function to Reflect Public Preference

By FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON

Mrs. Patterson is Instructor in Photoplay Composition at Columbia University and the author of two books on this subject, "Cinema Craftsmanship" and "Scenario and Screen." She is a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board and has for a long time been familiar with the Board's work of review and selection, which subject she presented at the 1934 Anniversary Conference.

MY subject is the work of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review, and I find myself a little bit embarrassed speaking on that subject. I am afraid I shall have to indulge in personalities, for it has just occurred to me that many of you are of the Review Committees. So I shall have to talk about you to your faces. I once had a professor who hated and detested the poet Byron. When he was pressed for a reason as to why he detested Byron, he said, "Well, you know, just fancy a man who gets up and says to the ocean, 'Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll', as if the ocean needed any permission from him to roll." I hadn't thought of that for a long time but I thought of it today because I feel I am guilty of somewhat the same sort of effrontery.

Nevertheless there are also field members here, people who are getting and using the services of the Review Committees and who are I imagine curious to find out just how conclusions in regard to pictures are reached by the Review Committees, and who are interested in the whole back-stage of the review work—I suppose there is a back-stage to that as well as to everything else. And even if you happen to be Review Committee members, perhaps this is the time and the place for you to consider briefly the work you have done as a whole. After all, the Review Committees act as units and may easily overlook the collective work that is being accomplished. So perhaps you will allow me to draw your attention to this big Empire State Building that you have been erecting over the past twenty-five years.

I think that one of the things we ought to bear in mind is that the review work done by the National Board is the first of its sort in the field. Every once in a while

a new organization comes up and is given space in the press and we acclaim the work it is doing in selection and so on. But after all the National Board was the parent organization and its work has been going on since about 1915 or '16 when the Board began to select and classify pictures, in order that the more constructive program of selection might take the place of the destructive work of censorship. In those days there was just a handful of people reviewing pictures and now there are four hundred people, going over the films that are submitted by the companies. Committee groups from these four hundred people see all of the domestic and foreign films released in this country. They see all of the domestic productions before their general release date, and they see all of the foreign films before they are released outside of New York City.

Now who are these four hundred people who review the films? They are people who come from every walk of life. They have all sorts of avocations and vocations. Their age limit goes from sixteen to the point of full maturity. More than anything else they are people who have been chosen for this work because they have as their motive social usefulness. They are selected by members of the Membership Committee. They may be anyone who has a social interest in films and who has been recommended for membership by a member in good standing. I said they come from every walk of life—I should have said except one: the motion picture industry. Anyone who is even remotely connected with the motion picture industry is not eligible for review membership on the National Board. And in that way, you see, the disinterestedness of the membership is maintained. No one on the Review Committees has any axe to grind. No one is paid at all for his services. He doesn't even get carfare to go to the review meetings. He has a disinterested and absolutely unbiased point of view to carry with him into the projection room.

When he gets into the projection room, the film is shown and afterwards there is a general discussion of its merits. Discussion is encouraged because it is the only way that these small groups can actually become a miniature motion picture audience and reflect public opinion. It is indeed very hard to reflect public opinion when there is only a very small cross-section of public opinion to see the film. Your reaction to the film is very different when you are with a little group in the projection room. There are certain emotions that are social emotions. For instance, laughter. Often in a projection room when a comedy is put on, there isn't a laugh. But when that same film is shown in a theatre where laughter is infectious and everybody is in a holiday mood, you have the whole audience laughing. Of course the National Board realizes this and tries to get its members to study reactions in the theatres as much as possible, in order that they may be competent to reflect public opinion. Not just to influence, but also to reflect public opinion is the function of the Review Committee.

After a picture has been shown and discussed, a ballot is filled out indicating the reviewer's opinion of it. The picture is either selected or not, as one worthy of popular theatre patronage, according to the judgment of the Committee. It is classified as to audience suitability being rated for: the mature audience (18 years up), the family audience (that is everybody above 12 years of age), and the junior matinee audience. The National Board recognizes that the screen at its fullest is directed toward adult entertainment. But it also recognizes that certain films are suitable for children and suggests that special junior matinees showing these films be sponsored and supported by interested parents.

There are ratings of the picture according to its entertainment value, whether excellent, good, fair or poor; instructional value, whether excellent, good, fair or poor; ethical value as to whether excellent, good, fair, or whether there is none. And then there is a special division in which the picture is recommended for schools and libraries, for cultural or educational purposes, for church use and for the list of films worth keeping permanently available.

If the picture seems to be above the average in artistic merit, to possess unusual qualities or to mark a departure in cinema technique it is referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, which is concerned purely with the aesthetics of the screen. The person making out the ballot signs his name and stands back of his decision and the ballot is handed in to the secretary for making his Committee report.

As I have said, the people are chosen for this work very carefully. After they have been nominated for membership, they fill out a blank on which they state their qualifications and their purpose in taking up the work. Then they are given a probationary period in which they go out with the reviewing groups to the projection rooms. If the person qualifies after his probationary period, he is elected for a period of six months. Every member of the Review Committee is elected twice a year and that, you see, keeps control of the personnel.

After this review service has been put into operation and the pictures are selected, I suppose the next question is, what does all this accomplish. Well I think that it is not too sanguine to say that the level of audience intelligence has been raised through the instrumentality of the review groups of the National Board of Review. The audience intelligence has reversed the usual social procedure. Instead of having its face lifted and being made to look young, the motion picture has had its mind lifted and it looks much older. If it used to be 14 years old, it is now at least 21. I remember I used to look at the lists of the ten best pictures that were compiled by the critics and there were almost never on the lists pictures that had met with approval at the box office. It was a pretty pitiful spectacle. The other day I looked at the 13 box office champions of the year compiled by the Motion Picture Herald from the receipts in all of the theatres throughout the country over the period of the year—a poll is taken every month and then a poll of the year is taken—and out of those 13 box office champions there were five that were on the list of the ten best pictures of the year chosen by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board. *Maedchen in Uniform* was one, *Little Women*, *Henry the*

VIII, *Cavalcade*, and *State Fair*, were others. Just think of that! The Review Committees are not picking the box office winners; they are *influencing* the box office winners. They are influencing people to support the better type of pictures. There is a good deal to hearten one about the work of the Review Committees. The progress has been very definite.

The next step is creating audiences for the unusual picture. That of course, does not fall under the work of the Review Committees except inasmuch as the Review Committees do recommend to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays those pictures which it sees. But in any case the creation of a wider audience for the unusual picture is, I think, of paramount importance. For instance, the picture *The Blood of a Poet* is perhaps one of the most original things that has been done on the screen since *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. What *Dr. Caligari* did for settings this picture does for ideas. It is allegory, ideas done in allegory and symbols, and as you know we have been a little bit short of allegory on the motion picture screen. The Board has done much in the past to bring such pictures to the attention of the public. In the future it will probably actually create a demand for them.

The independent producer should also, I think, be encouraged. Unfortunately motion picture exhibitors do not look with any friendship on the independent producer. And this is only natural, for after all an exhibitor has to have 52 subjects a year at least for the weekly change of program. A genius who is working on an independent picture may take four months to make it or he may take four years. Meanwhile the exhibitor has to have a picture to show in his theatre out in Oshkosh, or perhaps at the Lotus Theatre in Hongkong or somewhere else. He cannot afford to wait on genius. But groups such as the National Board's review groups and the affiliated organizations in the field can always keep a place for the good independent picture and give it a showing when it comes along. There can be no doubt that the renaissance of the motion picture lies with the independent producer who makes a picture because he has something to say and not be-

cause he must fill in a release schedule. New methods of picture telling, new uses of the medium, which are exclaimed at, or even disdained as "high-brow" or "arty", in the independent picture of today, are incorporated into the program picture of tomorrow, and so freshen and quicken the general current of production.

Another contributing factor to the rebirth of the screen will be the writer who thinks and expresses himself in terms of pictures. This is, perhaps, a little bit off the subject of the review work of the National Board, but there may be people of literary ability and originality in the Review Committees who want to go on from looking at pictures and thinking about pictures actually to writing for pictures. So since there is going to be a place for the new type of screen writer in the not very distant future, they and you in the field may as well be interested.

Supporting Church Interest in Community Motion Picture Organization

(Continued from page 7)

with the Amateur Cinema League by which the League will give technical guidance to such groups.

The Federal Council's Committee will give major attention to the training of young people in motion picture appreciation. Groups of young people in many churches are studying the techniques of the motion picture, and standards of judging them. They see all kinds of pictures together and discuss them afterwards under guidance of directors of religious education. They are manifesting great enthusiasm and intelligent appreciation of the artistic, moral, and social values in films. The things they learn and their enthusiasms will spread to their families.

The great object of Better Films Councils, with their tremendous educational possibilities, is the creation, as rapidly as possible, of a vast and widening circle of people, young and old, who know a good picture when they see one and will not knowingly go to see a poor one.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Half a Year

FOR lack of those rare films that seem—at least at first sight—of the memorable sort that we call exceptional, we must be content this month with looking back at what the year has brought in the way of films merely pleasurable. As the average skill in movie making gains in general smoothness and facility—the kind of slickness in which American films are admitted to excel—certain incidental excellencies that used to seem exceptional have come to be taken for granted. We now expect any decent movie product to tell a story effectively, with suitably good acting and photography appropriately beautiful. To be unusual, exceptional, we look more and more for a motion picture to say something of importance, either as a piece of realism or of imagination—to catch something of those elements of truth and beauty that are essential in any of the arts. Of course they come no oftener on the screen than in literature or music or any other aesthetic realm of creation. But the year so far has brought its share of films that have been enjoyable and worth making some effort to find if one has not already seen them.

Among the newest films is *Little Man What Now*, an adaptation that was worth doing and has its excellencies. Margaret Sullavan and Douglass Montgomery and Alan Hale are among them, and a plausible atmosphere of Germany, as well as a good deal of faithfulness to the novel. But whether or not one has read the novel, there is a shock for the thoughtful in the childish happy ending, so violently out of key with

the rest of the story that it recalls that ancient device of dodging whereby someone wakes up and the audience can sigh with relief—"Hooray, it was nothing but a dream!" The rainbow just around the corner was after all not the point of this piteous tale of two young humans seeking their chance to work and live.

Just right in every respect is the best of the overland bus cycle, *It Happened One Night*. Romantic comedy, intermingled with adventure and humor, it is fresh and refreshing, with Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert in more attractive aspects than they usually get a chance to show. Of the newspaper cycle, columnist division, is *Hi Nellie*, a lively tale with Paul Muni displaying his versatility by a very successful go at comedy.

Once in a while a producer takes a chance with a story without a love interest and without women. Such a film is *The Lost Patrol*, the grim but vivid and exciting record of some British soldiers lost in the desert and surrounded by unseen enemies. Its heroic qualities make it too stirring to be depressing, and it has Victor McLaglen—so often wasted in trashy yarns—at his best.

Of comedy—our most admirable and characteristic native product—there are excellent examples. One of the best is *Twentieth Century*, a wild and hilarious tale of extravagantly temperamental theatre people. It is likely to seem incredible to people who do not know the breed—those strange creatures of the mimic world who have forgotten how to live without acting—but it must surely be amusing even to those who do not believe it; to those who can recognize its sharp truthfulness it is doubly entertaining. It has John Barrymore letting loose with

all his zest for comedy, and that admirable actor Walter Connolly running him a close second.

There is W. C. Fields, too long obscured by inadequate material, coming to the fore again in *You're Telling Me*. There are Charles Ruggles and Mary Boland—incomparable team—giving body to the frothy romance of *Melody in Spring*. There is James Cagney, always vivid to the point of violence with his own brand of racy humor, in *Jimmy the Gent*, and, at the far other end of the scale, George Arliss, more nearly American than ever before, in *The Last Gentleman*, a surprisingly salty tale of an old Massachusetts millionaire of ancient lineage and the crafty way he disposed of his fortune.

Melodrama, too, has its pleasant items. *The Mystery of Mr. X*, grim enough in plot, manages to be amusing as well as thrilling because of Robert Montgomery, and *Manhattan Melodrama*, synthetic though its juxtaposition of good man against bad man may be, manages to be vigorous entertainment because of Clark Gable and William Powell. William Powell also figures vividly in *The Thin Man*, an excellent screening of Dashiell Hammett's hard-boiled detective tale.

And there is *Wild Cargo*, Frank Buck's re-creation of his own adventures, one of the most plausible and interesting of jungle pictures. It abounds in fascinating detail of how animals are captured, and is produced with an exceptional skill in showmanship and a minimum of that embarrassing strutting usually so obtrusive when a wild animal hunter takes to photographing his own exploits.

A new star—at least momentarily—on the horizon is small Shirley Temple, who has been hitherto lending her four-year-old charm to some pleasant little Educational comedies. In *Little Miss Marker* she has a full-length part, which is drawing people into theatres in droves to see a sentimental fiction about gamblers reluctantly reformed by the little-child-shall-lead-them method. The sentiment and fantasy is laid on a bit thick for comfort, but little Miss Temple has that rare thing in child actors for which one must go back to Jackie Coogan's first appearance for a comparison. The unpreten-

tious bits in her short comedies show her to better advantage than this longer effort.

Foreign films are scarce. The general audience attitude toward Germany keeps most of the German films—some of them very pleasant films—confined to German-speaking localities, but *The Blue Light* is reaching a wider public and is creating some talk. It was made by Leni Riefenstahl in the Dolomite mountains, a peasant legend of a girl persecuted for witchcraft by the superstitious peasantry. The lovely star, whose skill at mountain-climbing figured so effectively in *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* and *Avalanche*, acts as producer, director and star of this new film, with consequent results—her inclinations to be movieish are uncurbed, and in the midst of glorious scenery, beautifully photographed, and authentic peasant types done full justice to by the cameraman, she somehow manages the appearance of just having emerged from one of Mr. Von Sternberg's studio sets. The film, however, has unusual qualities.

In addition to its excellent Magic Carpet series—the best travelogues that we see—Fox is now releasing a very interesting series called *Adventures of the Newsreel Cameraman*. High spots from a library of news reels are collected under different subjects—speed-racing, storms at sea, riots, “scraping the sky” etc. They are skilfully edited and full of thrills—the only drawback to them is the commentator, who is addicted to calling repeated attention to the cameraman's courage (of which the film itself provides plentiful evidence) in an inferior brand of McNameese—a style of talk far too prevalent as an accompaniment to newsreels and sufficiently distressing even at its best.—J.S.H.

PAGLIACCI, a short film, in which the actor Henry Hull appears as Canio, the tragic clown of the famous opera, has been released by Educational Pictures.

This film introduces a new technique in the presentation of grand opera on the screen. Famous scenes from *Pagliacci* are sung by world-renowned artists, while foremost players of the stage, headed by Henry Hull, portray the action in pantomime. Thus is effected a satisfactory blending of

two arts—music and drama—each of which is treated independently of the other.

When the famous aria is heard, a rich operatic voice is singing it, while Henry Hull is providing the dramatic action. No attempt is made to synchronize lip action with offstage sound, the actor merely interpreting the rôle in pantomime.

Selected Pictures Guide

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paper a wealthy girl dons a blonde wig, and a Southern drawl, gets a job on the same paper and soon has her revenge on the young reporter. *Family*.

HOLLYWOOD PARTY—Jimmy Durante, Mickey Mouse, Charles Butterworth and Lupe Velez. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. A large number of entertainers combine in a wild hodgepodge, elaborately produced, some of it funny, some of it draggy. Mickey Mouse and a colored cartoon number contribute one of the high spots. *Mature*.

KEY, THE—William Powell, Edna Best and Colin Clive. *Warner*. A story of human interest, told against the background of the Sinn Fein activities. A man sacrifices everything to bring back to the woman he loves her husband. The picture is interesting and well acted. *Mature*.

***LAST GENTLEMAN, THE**—George Arliss and Edna May Oliver. From play by Katherine Clugston. *United Artists*. Amusing, sometimes touching, comedy of an old New England family and how the head of it weeded the sheep from the goats in the matter of who should inherit his fortune. An excellent film of the Arliss kind, and an original twist at the end. *Family*. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

***LITTLE MAN WHAT NOW**—Margaret Sullivan and Douglass Montgomery. From novel by Hans Fallada. *Universal*. An interesting story about a young couple who fight against heavy odds to make a home for their coming baby. The directing, photography and acting are all excellent. *Mature*. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

***LITTLE MISS MARKER**—Shirley Temple and Adolphe Menjou. *Paramount*. A pleasing, amusing and at times almost fantastic story about a little girl whose love for King Arthur and his Knights brings about a great change in the lives of a gang of racetrack followers who are bringing her up. The acting of Shirley Temple aided by an excellent cast brings the production to the level of what might be considered an exceptional photoplay. *Family*. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

LOST JUNGLE, THE—Clyde Beatty and Cecilia Parker. *Mascot*. Circus and jungle adventures with Clyde Beatty performing thrill-

ing feats with wild animals. In 7 reels and in serial form. *Family*. Junior matinee.

MAN FROM UTAH, THE—John Wayne. *Monogram*. The "stranger" in this film finds a kind of villainy to fight different from usual—that practiced by a group of rodeo racketeers. Much of the riding and shooting similar to other Westerns, but the rodeo element has some novelty and the photography is unusually good. *Family*.

***MANHATTAN MELODRAMA**—Clark Gable, William Powell and Myrna Loy. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. The story of a bad boy who hero-worshipped a good boy, and continued to after he had become a criminal and the other a district attorney and Governor. Skillful melodrama, effectively acted. *Mature*. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS—Gracie Allen and George Burns. *Paramount*. An amusing comedy starring the two radio comedians who are ably assisted by Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians. Gracie's father pays George to marry her and George spends his honeymoon figuring up how much he will make while Gracie in her dumb way wonders what it is all about. They eventually land in Hollywood where many strange events occur. *Family*.

MURDER AT THE VANITIES—Carl Brisson, Kitty Carlisle, Victor McLaglen and Jack Oakie. *Paramount*. A thrilling murder mystery behind the scenes at Earl Carroll's Vanities while the show goes on. The production is lavish, the acting good and the interest sustained. *Mature*.

NOW I'LL TELL—Helen Twelvetrees, Spencer Tracy and Alice Faye. From novel by Mrs. Arnold Rothstein. *Fox*. A sombrely exciting story—presumably the life-story of Arnold Rothstein—of a gambler whose code was "you're only wrong if you fail." Probably the most truthful story of this type the movies have made, aided by the particularly penetrating acting of Spencer Tracy. *Mature*.

PARTY'S OVER, THE—Stuart Erwin and Ann Sothorn. From play by Daniel Kussell. *Columbia*. How the one successful young man of a family bore the burdens of the rest until several last straws brought a revolt. Often amusing, mostly very true, with a good cast. *Mature*.

PRIVATE SCANDAL—Mary Brian and Phillips Holmes. *Paramount*. An amusing murder mystery about a man who is planning to commit suicide but the job is done for him. ZaSu Pitts as the bewildered secretary of the dead man, and Ned Sparks as the officious investigator do excellent work and bring the picture into the comedy class. *Mature*.

RETURN OF THE TERROR—Lyle Talbot and Mary Astor. Suggested by Edgar Wallace's story. *First National*. A murder mystery involving the head doctor at a private insane asylum. Interesting for those who like mystery stories. The doctor is convicted of murdering four patients and pleads insanity in

order to have time to get the real criminal. The entire story covers one night during a violent thunder storm. *Mature.*

SADIE MCKEE—*Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone and Gene Raymond. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* The daughter of a cook—a straight-forward, honest girl—who became a millionaire's wife, and the three men who loved her. An excellent cast, some good showmanship, and a saner view of life than one would expect from the plot. *Mature.*

***STINGAREE**—*Irene Dunne, Richard Dix and Mary Boland. Novel by E. W. Hornung. RKO.* A romance laid in Australia in the seventies, of a notorious robber who helps a girl to become a great opera singer. Rather theatrical, but dashing and likely to please Richard Dix fans. *Family.*

***THIN MAN, THE**—*William Powell, Myrna Loy and Maureen O'Sullivan. Novel by Dashiell Hammett. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* An excellent screening of the well-known detective story, which has individuality, good characterizations, tension and a plentiful sprinkling of humor. Hard-boiled, as might be expected from its author, but first-rate of its kind. *Mature.* See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

THIRTY DAY PRINCESS—*Sylvia Sidney and Cary Grant. Novel by Clarence B. Kelland. Paramount.* A romance of a mythical kingdom which sends its princess to America to float a loan. Complications arise when she is taken ill on landing and a double has to be found for the thirty days necessary to negotiate the loan. Fantastic and unreal but entertaining. *Family.*

***TWENTIETH CENTURY**—*John Barrymore, Carole Lombard and Walter Connolly. Columbia.* An extravagant, roaring comedy of theatrical temperament—the struggle between the enormous egos of a producer and a star. The fun piles up to a loud and furious pace, with John Barrymore letting loose in a burlesque comedy part. *Mature.* See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

Foreign Productions

ADIEU LES BEAUX JOURS (Farewell Lovely Days)—*Brigitte Helm and Jean Gabin. Ufa.* The pursuit of a beautiful jewel thief. Light and romantic mystery story, photographed in Spain and Southern Europe. French with English titles. *Family.*

ALONG CAME SALLY—*Cicely Courtneidge and Sam Hardy. Gaumont-British.* A British comedy which has its moments—the plot is concerned with a comedienne of the Winnie Lightner type who saves an American nightclub promoter from an English conception of a gang of gunmen who have come from New York to "shake him down." The musical numbers border on the extravagant and the interest is fairly well sustained. *Family.*

ALRAUNE—*Brigitte Helm. Capitol.* A psychological study of a scientist and the harm he brought about by creating life in the form of

a girl. Very well acted and directed, but it requires a fairly thorough knowledge of German to be enjoyed. *Mature.*

***BLUE LIGHT, THE**—*Leni Riefenstahl. Gil Boag.* A story of peasant life, apparently laid in the Italian Tyrol, mostly concerning a poor and beautiful girl feared and hated as a witch on account of a strange phenomenon produced by moonlight on a bed of crystal. Unusual, and beautifully photographed. Dialogue in German, Italian and Tyrolean dialect. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family.* See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

CAMBRIDGE—*Gaumont-British.* A one reel British film showing beautifully photographed scenes of Cambridge. *Family.*

CHANNEL CROSSING—*Matheson Lang, Constance Cummings and Anthony Bushell. Gaumont-British.* The story of a great financier who on a Dover-Calais boat learns of the great crash and exposure facing him in Paris. Two young people are involved. An interesting film, in which the atmosphere of a channel crossing is particularly vivid. *Mature.*

FRIDAY THE 13TH—*Jessie Matthews, Sonnie Hale and Frank Lawton. Gaumont-British.* A cleverly directed film with a rather novel plot—the showing of episodes in the lives of various people in a bus wreck, just before they boarded the bus. The excellent cast supplies much comedy and some dramatic moments, and the film as a whole is very entertaining. *Mature.*

***GAMIA STAN (The Old City)**—*Scandinavian Talking Pictures.* A one reel, particularly lovely picture of the quaint old parts of Stockholm, into which the suggestion of a story is subtly woven. Silent, except for a brief spoken introduction in Swedish, with music. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available. *Family.*

GEM OF THE ROCKIES—*Gaumont-British.* A one-reel scenic, showing lovely views of the Canadian Rockies. *Family.*

JA, TREU IST DIE SOLDATENLIEBE (Yes, Soldier's Love Is True Love)—*Fritz Schultz. Unger.* A good-humored circus story, with the rivalry between a clown and an equestrienne, as its basis. Lively and colorful. *Family.*

JUST SMITH—*Tom Walls and Carol Goodner.* From play "Never Come Back" by Frederick Lonsdale. *Gaumont-British.* An amusing comedy about a crook who was also a gentleman. *Mature.*

KARA SLAKTEN (Dear Relatives)—*Gosta Ekman, Tutta Berntzen and Carl Barklind. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.* A highly enjoyable comedy—if one knows Swedish—about a wealthy merchant and his troubles with the men his three daughters marry. Delightfully humorous characterizations. *Family.*

MARGIT GIFTER SIG (Margit Gets Married)—*Scandinavian Talking Pictures.* A one reel travelogue, showing a honeymoon by air from Stockholm to Paris and London. Well done. *Family.*

MELODIA PROHIBIDA, LA (The Forbidden Melody)—*Jose Mojica, Conchita Montenegro and Mona Maris. Fox.* A Spanish musical romance, of a South Sea Island prince lured away from his native people to be a cabaret singer. The music is very good and Mojica's voice one of the best to be heard on the screen. Others in the cast are also very good. *Mature.*

NEW HIGHWAY—*Gaumont-British.* A one reel subject, a fine example of the English type of informational film, showing interestingly and vividly the English air-travel system. *Family.*

ORDERS IS ORDERS—*Cyril Maude, James Gleason and Charlotte Greenwood. Gaumont-British.* A comedy of the complications created by an American movie director and his company barging into an English military barracks to make a picture. Though exaggerated to the point of farce, the Americans and British are true enough to type to make an amusing show. *Family.*

OXFORD—*Gaumont-British.* A beautiful and interesting series of pictures of the English university town, in one reel. *Family.*

PESTI SZERELEM (Romance in Budapest)—*Franziska Gaal. DuWorld.* Delightful musical romance in Hungarian with occasional titles in English. *Family.*

PRINCE OF WALES, THE—*Gaumont-British*
A compilation of newsreels covering the life and public activities of the Prince of Wales. A bit long drawn out but interesting, because of the Prince's attractive personality. *Family.*

WINDSOR—*Gaumont-British.* A one-reel subject of well-photographed scenes of Windsor Castle, with bits of historical information thrown in. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

INFORMATIONALS

ANSWERING THE RIOT CALL (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—*Fox.* Showing conflicts between mobs and police all over the world. *Family.*
CITY OF THE GOLDEN GATE, THE (Magic Carpet)—*Fox.* About San Francisco. *Family. Junior matinee.*
CONQUEST OF THE AIR (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—*Fox.* Airplane manoeuvres. *Family.*
DARTMOUTH DAYS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family.*
DUMB CHAMPS (World of Sports)—*Columbia.* Athletic animals. *Family. Junior matinee.*
***EGYPT, THE KINGDOM OF THE NILE** (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family. Junior matinee.*
FLYING HUNTERS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Hunting coyotes by airplane. *Family.*
FOLLOWING THE HORSES (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—*Fox. Family.*
GIBRALTAR (Vagabond Adventures)—*RKO. Family.*
HARNESSED LIGHTNING (World of Sports)—*Columbia.* Showing the Hamiltonians. Of interest especially for horse-lovers. *Family.*
LUCKY ANGLERS (Sportlight)—*Paramount.* Fishing for strange fish in strange ways. *Family.*
MARCH OF THE YEARS NO. 9—*Columbia.* Happenings and personalities of other days and today. *Family.*
MOTOR MANIA (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—*Fox.* Dangers of motor speed racing. *Family.*
ROCK OF GIBRALTAR, THE (Magic Carpet)—*Fox. Family.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NOS. 11-12—*Paramount. Family.*
SCOURING THE SEVEN SEAS (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—*Fox.* Dangers of filming storms at sea. *Family.*

SCRAPING THE SKY (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—*Fox.* Full of the thrills that go with high places. *Family.*
SLACKERS AND WORKERS OF THE JUNGLE (Newman Traveltalk)—*Vitaphone.* Monkeys as slackers and elephants as workers. *Family. Junior matinee.*

CARTOONS

ANNIE MOVED AWAY (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal. Family. Junior matinee.*
ART FOR ART'S SAKE (Little King)—*RKO. Family.*
***BIG BAD WOLF, THE** (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists. Family. Junior matinee.*
BETTY BOOP'S RISE TO FAME (Talkartoon)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
BUDDY'S TROLLEY TROUBLES (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone. Family. Junior matinee.*
***GOIN' TO HEAVEN ON A MULE** (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone. Family. Junior matinee.*
***GULLIVER MICKEY** (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists. Family. Junior matinee.*
MASQUERADE PARTY, THE (Krazy Kat)—*Columbia. Family. Junior matinee.*
REDUCING CREME (Willie Whopper)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family.*
SCRAPPY'S DOG SHOW (Scrappy)—*Columbia. Family. Junior matinee.*
THIS LITTLE PIGGIE WENT TO MARKET (Bouncing Ball)—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS

ALLEZ OOP—*Educational, 2 reels.* Busten Keaton comedy. *Family.*
ATTENTION SUCKERS!—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Pete Smith comments on an interesting exhibition of the tricks of a card-sharp. *Family.*
BENNY FROM PANAMA—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Eddie Foy, Jr., and Jeanette Loff in a slapstick farce. *Family.*
BIG IDEA, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Nonsense and music well blended. *Family.*
DARLING ENEMY—*Vitaphone, 2 reels.* Gertrude Niesen in a musical number. *Family.*
***FIRST ROUND-UP, THE**—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Our Gang goes on an all-night camping trip. *Family. Junior matinee.*
FISHING FOR TROUBLE—*Columbia, 2 reels.* Charles Murray and George Sidney in an amusing slapstick. *Family.*
GOOD SCOUT, A—*Educational, 2 reels.* Tom Howard in an amusing bit of nonsense. *Family.*
GOOFY MOVIES NO. 4—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Burlesque of newsreels. *Family.*
HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 11—*Paramount. Family. Junior matinee.*
HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NO. 12—*Paramount. Family.*
HONKEY DONKEY—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Our Gang and a donkey. *Family. Junior matinee.*
LITTLE FELLER—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Chic Sale recites with action a sad narrative. *Family.*
LOST JUNGLE, THE (serial)—*Mascot, 2 reels each. No. 6—The Battle of Beasts, No. 7—The Tiger's Prey, No. 8—The Lion's Brood, No. 9—Eyes of the Jungle, No. 10—Human Hyenas.* Clyde Beatty and his animals in an excellent serial. *Family. Junior matinee.*
MASKS AND MEMORIES—*Vitaphone, 3 reels.* Lillian Roth in a musical story of Mardi Gras. *Family.*
NIP-UPS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Some astonishing acrobatic feats. *Family. Junior matinee.*
NO MORE WEST—*RKO, 2 reels.* Bert Lahr burlesquing western melodrama. *Family.*
OLD SHEP—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A sad narrative about a dog, recited with action by Chic Sale. *Family.*
SALTED SEANUTS—*Vitaphone, 2 reels.* Charles Judels and George Givot in a comedy of two sailors. *Family.*
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 8—*Columbia.* Screen celebrities at a ball. *Family.*
SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 11—*Paramount. Family.*
TIN HAT HARMONY—*Vitaphone.* Abe Lyman and his orchestra. *Family.*
UNDERNEATH THE BROADWAY MOON—*Paramount.* Isham Jones and his orchestra. *Family.*

AN indispensable book on our library shelves is the Film Year Book published by the Film Daily. The 1934 edition is bigger and better than ever, having over a thousand pages of facts, figures and fundamentals of the motion picture in all its phases.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions

\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) . . . 25c

Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) . free

Special film lists each 10c

Junior Matinee Films

Foreign Films

Educational Films

Selected Book-Films

Films on Subjects of Timely Interest

Exceptional Photoplays

Musical Films

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The Hope for
Better Pictures



The Place of Research in
Visual Education



Pleasing all the People



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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*AGE OF INNOCENCE—Irene Dunne, John Boles. Novel by Edith Wharton. RKO-Radio. Romantic drama of the '80's, beautifully costumed and acted and with lovely settings. A young girl who has lived in Europe since childhood returns to New York and finds the conventions of her family difficult to understand. The picture is poignant without being overly sentimental. *Mature.*

AMONG THE MISSING—Henrietta Crosman, Richard Cromwell. Columbia. An old lady gets a job as housekeeper and finds herself working for a gang of crooks but stays to help a young boy, the latest member of the gang. *Family.*

*BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET, THE—Norma Shearer, Charles Laughton, Fredric March. Play by Rudolf Besier. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A beautifully photographed and faithful adaptation of the play about the romance of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. Fredric March is not a perfect Browning but otherwise the whole production is definitely superior. Nothing objectionable for the family but its interest is for mature minds. Worth being kept permanently available. *Mature.*

BELLE OF THE NINETIES—Mae West, Roger Pryor. Paramount. The romance of an actress and a prizefighter, full of Mae West wisecracks and good atmosphere. The plot is pretty hodgepodge but it contains a lot of incidental entertainment. *Mature.*

BLIND DATE—Ann Sothern. Columbia. A pre-marital triangle, in which a working girl has to choose between an honest garage man and a rich chap whose designs seem at first not to be too honest. Not novel in plot but with a good deal of human interest. *Family.*

BLUE DANUBE, THE—Joseph Schildkraut, Brigitte Helm. United Artists. Romance of gypsy love, in and around Budapest. Attractively done though a conventional story, with a remarkably good gypsy orchestra playing superbly. *Mature.*

*BRITISH AGENT—Leslie Howard, Kay Francis. Based on book by H. Bruce Lockhart. First National. Picture far above the average in which Leslie Howard gives a superb performance in the title role—that of a young Englishman stationed in Petrograd and later Moscow at the time Russia was negotiating with Germany for peace and his efforts to defeat this plan for the good of the Allies. *Mature.*

*CAT'S PAW, THE—Harold Lloyd, Una Merkel. Novel by Clarence B. Kelland. Fox. The son of a missionary, coming back to his home town, is elected mayor by political trickery of which he is ignorant and turns on the politicians, cleaning up the city by novel methods. Not so full of gags as the usual Lloyd comedy, but more of a story and excellent entertainment. *Family.*

CHAINED—Joan Crawford, Clark Gable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A leisurely love story of a girl and two men, handsomely produced. Less impassioned than one might expect. *Mature.*

CHARLIE CHAN IN LONDON—Warner Oland. Fox. One of the better Charlie Chan mysteries, in which an innocent man had to be saved from execution in a very short time. *Family.*

*CLEOPATRA—Claudette Colbert, Warren William, Henry Wilcoxon. Paramount. A super-production about Cleopatra's love for Marc Anthony and the battle for world power between Rome and Egypt. *Family.*

CRIME WITHOUT PASSION—Claude Rains, Margot. Story "The Caballero of the Law" by Ben Hecht. Paramount. Fascinating and absorbing story of a man, intellectually brilliant and cruel, whose emotions make him a prey to his own clever schemes. Claude Rains gives a remarkably fine performance and Margot is excellent. The direction is superb. *Mature.*

DAMES—Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Joan Blondell. Warner. Clever dance sequences and good songs make this latest musical an entertaining one though it has the usual musical film plot of a boy trying to stage a show despite great difficulties. *Family.*

*DEATH ON THE DIAMOND—Robert Young, Nat Pendleton, Ted Healy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Excellent entertainment, combining mystery, comedy and the double suspense of exciting baseball games and danger to the lives of the principle players. *Family.*

(Continued on page 17)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The Hope for Better Pictures

IN an ideal world, motion pictures—if they existed at all in such a world—would be such perfect embodiments of truth that no one could be uncertain about their moral effect: right and wrong, with their just and inevitable effects, would show themselves infallibly and unmistakably, in whatever subtle and relative guises they appeared, and no one could be led astray.

But the world is still imperfect, not ideal, though ideals persist and struggle on. This summer has seen ideals about motion pictures sturdily asserting themselves once more, more organized and more vocal—and more effective, it would appear—than ever before. Effective at least in giving the picture-makers pause, and making them take account of stock.

It has never seemed completely proved that motion picture producers are just a gang of villains, bent upon nothing but debauching the public. Rather have they seemed a bewildered group of merchants, with an enormous clientele to whom they were almost pathetically eager to give perfect satisfaction. There is no doubt that if the public demanded and patronized masterpieces the producers would produce masterpieces—if they could. Their greatest trouble is that they are never quite sure what the public does want. When they do succeed in making a lucky guess, and a popular hit, we immediately find the market glutted with repetitions of the hit.

The public, being so large, is largely inarticulate except through the potent voice of its dimes and quarters at the box office.

And the things that this great mass of people hurry to see on the screen are not on a very different level from the things they buy to read in the newspapers and periodicals of large circulation, or from what they listen to in the greatest numbers on the radio. A good deal of it is futile but probably harmless. Much of it is silly and stupid, false to life and far from uplifting either in taste or morals, the best of it seldom anything better than negative. Rarely is there a movie, just as there is rarely a book read by millions, which one can positively assert has had any beneficial effect on many people's taste or conduct. Because the public gets what it appears to want.

"Appears to want" may not mean "does want." For who can interpret the desires of the inarticulate masses? The groups of men and women, of all faiths and all professions, who swept the country this summer with their strong demands for a different kind of movies—call them better or cleaner or what—may have done something toward giving the public a voice. The results will depend on what that voice says, for producers can heed a voice only when it says something they can understand. For a while, in a sort of panic, they will obey the "don't do this" and "don't do that" kind of mandate, which won't get them far unless they know what is wanted instead of "this" and "that." In the long run the only thing they will depend on will be what the public goes to see and what it stays away from.

The answer still seems to be—and it is no news to readers of this magazine—that

better films become more numerous the more the public improves in its taste and encourages better films.. And films that really present cinematic art, with no hope of ap-

peal to the masses, will not even be attempted in any numbers till producers for some reason become willing to make an occasional picture for a limited audience.—J.S.H.

Place of Research in Visual Education

By DR. F. DEAN McCLUSKY

There is at this season, with a new school year starting, an especial interest in the use of motion pictures in education. Many schools are backward in accepting this new medium of teaching because they feel doubtful of its merit. What such an authority as Dr. McClusky, who is president of the Metropolitan New York Branch, Department of Visual Instruction of the National Education Association and Director of the Scarborough School, has to say is of decided value and we are therefore printing below from his address delivered at the Board's 1934 Annual Conference.

I should like to define research as any effort on the part of man to predict the future. That, of course, involves a study of the past and a study of phenomena in the present. But after all what we want to know is what is going to happen tomorrow, that is the thing which is of the greatest interest to us.

It took man three thousand years approximately, to so perfect the use of a book that he by research could print books in large numbers.

Now we have had within the last one hundred years the invention of a second great method of communication and that is the motion picture. We hope somehow, some way, to make use of this great second method of communication in improving instruction in our schools.

At the time of the Paris International Exposition, which was about 1870, America sent an exhibition of school books to France for the exposition and it created a great furore on the Continent because we used school books so widely and they did not. Even today America is known as a textbook or school book country in the minds of

world educators. In other words, while it is true that the printing press came into being along somewhere about 1400, it is also true that it has taken man several hundred years to so perfect the book made by the printing press that it could be used widely in our schools for instructional purposes. Now the question is, can research speed up the time which it will take for man to use this second great method of communication, the motion picture, when it will find itself in the schools to the same extent that books are being used in the schools today? That is the real problem. It is the real place of research in visual instruction. The only person who can answer that question and speed up the time is the research worker.

I have always been fascinated by carnivals. The gaudiness, the musty canvas, the ballyhoo and the air of mystery that characterizes a street fair grips my interest. It was at carnivals that I first saw motion pictures. Who can forget that first thriller, *The Great Train Robbery*? As crude as it now appears, it was then the peer of them all. I saw it at least three times and last fall a fourth in a revival. It was out of the carnival that the motion picture developed as an American institution of entertainment. And this carnival ancestry has left an indelible stamp on the cinema. The tattoo marks of the street fair side-show are Hollywood's trademark.

It is not strange, therefore, that the application of the motion picture to more serious fields, such as education, should have carried with it some of the mardi gras atmosphere, particularly the ballyhoo. To the lay mind the use of the term "teaching pictures" connotes an educational carnival. B. C.

("before the crash" as Eddie Cantor puts it) the motion picture became synonymous with thrills, happy days and California sunshine. It was argued that to teach the youth of the land with the magic cinema would turn the drudgery of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and history into a perpetual picnic.

At this time men like Thomas A. Edison and Henry Ford launched into the production of pictures for education on a wide scale. Educators remembering their own dull days in the schoolroom, saw in the cinema a chance to render the educational diet more palatable. Companies for producing and distributing school films were organized and put in operation so that by 1927 over \$50,000,000 had been expended in attempts to introduce the motion picture into every-day classroom instruction. But it did not work. The schools of the country refused the candy.

Mankind has a hard struggle to be intelligent. Dr. Shotwell, historian at Columbia Univ., says it took man 50,000 years to learn to use his thumb in using hand implements. A recent book on the foolishness of some of our great minds illustrates this point. In this book it is related how Franklin cut a hole in the porch door so that the mother cat could get in and out and then cut a smaller hole for the kittens. To assume that the discipline of schooling may be turned into a picnic is just as foolish. The early attempts to use the cinema in education lacked the disciplinary point of view. The function of entertainment and of schooling was confused and as a result the educational motion picture was neither good education nor good entertainment. The child was quick to see this and called school movies a "gyp" or a "chisel." This situation has developed so severe a reaction that I have recently heard serious-minded, intelligent persons who are ready to give money to this thing argue against using the term "educational" in connection with any movies for school use. We have had enough of education, they say.

Well, what might have been done to avoid this situation? The answer is so obvious that one wonders why it was not done. Experiments could have been set up to find out

how to use the cinema in instruction. Now anyone familiar with so-called visual research will immediately say, "But it was done." My answer is that this was not done and so we start the argument.

To date the reports of 39 studies in visual instruction have appeared in print. Of these printed studies 12 have been of sufficient scope and importance to be published in book or monograph form. The remainder have appeared in pamphlets or as magazine articles in our own professional journals.

If one were to attempt to read all these reports it would engage a fairly rapid reader who was technically informed reading eight hours a day at least 25 days of solid reading to complete the task. This will serve to show that there has been an immense amount of so-called research done in the field of visual instruction. But I shall save you the task, if any of you are interested in reading all of these technical reports, by saying that each and every one of them with but minor exceptions deals with the least important aspects of visual instruction. In general all of these research workers have discovered that which we already know; namely, that the motion picture is a powerful instructional device. Here and there the conclusions point to a solution of the real problem; that is, how to use the cinema in the classroom.

In the early days of visual research there were a number of studies which compared the motion picture with text-books, or teachers, or oral methods. This led to considerable apprehension among educators as to the motives of sponsors of visual instruction. Some enthusiasts predicted that the motion picture would supplant text-books and teachers in schools. Thomas A. Edison was quoted in 1922 as placing the time for the departure of the teachers along with the horse and buggy at ten years. It is now 1934. Of course this research created opposition to the visual instruction idea. (I don't really call it research, it wasn't anything of the sort, but it comes under that heading.) Teachers feared that the cinema would throw them out of employment. Furthermore, while they knew that the cinema had a contribution to make

in instruction what they wanted to know was how best to use this new medium of imparting knowledge.

They were disappointed. Study after study was set up to prove the value of the cinema. The first break from this form of research came with Freeman's commonwealth studies published by the University of Chicago Press.* Freeman directed attention to the necessity of determining the place of visual materials in teaching. This study influenced the terminology of visual instruction enough to bring the visual aid phrase into use. The attention was thus shifted from comparisons, that is comparisons of the teacher vs. the movie and the text-book vs. the movie, to how the cinema should be used to aid the classroom teacher.

However, the advent of the sound motion picture has brought with it a return to the early type of visual research of twelve years ago. Thousands of dollars have been expended in comparing sound motion pictures with other forms of instruction. I might say that in one study we attempted to direct by correspondence those in charge of the study to this other type of thing and they didn't even pay any attention to it. All they wanted to do was to show that sound motion pictures would teach more effectively than a teacher.

It is not the silent motion picture, or the sound motion picture vs. the classroom teacher, the motion picture vs. the slide, the slide vs. the stereograph, which needs investigation, but rather how can these several mechanical aids to instruction be most effectively integrated into a practical school situation. Each mechanical aid has its own advantages and disadvantages and each has a particular contribution to make in teaching. What needs to be done is the systematic organization of a practical program in which the various visual aids are used to the greatest advantage in terms of philosophical, psychological and economical criteria.

What are some of the obstacles to be overcome to accomplish this goal? In the first place the commercial interests are divided in accordance with the various types of visual aids they have to sell and it is very important to consider this fact.

*Freeman, Frank N., *Visual Education*, University of Chicago Press, 1924.

Now a second point is that a staff needs to be trained, a staff of teachers, in the methods of visual instruction. Our educational tendency is to seize upon one medium of instruction or upon some device or vehicle of instruction and then ride that to death. I know certain educators who are characterized by the fact that this one is the slide man, or this is the motion picture man, or this is the project man or this is something else. And the result is that on the whole we find the same division with respect to devices of instruction appearing in our schools themselves. And you see this is a tremendous obstacle, because it means that they have got to get together and work out a program which uses all of these devices. These are not instruction in themselves, they are devices.

Third, if we are going to set up a kind of practical demonstration which will show us how to use visual aids and do it under research conditions, we must find a group of parents who will agree to permit their children to become the guinea pigs of the experiment. That is not an easy thing to do. Parents will say, "Well, it is all right for somebody else's child but I am not going to have my child experimented upon by these new fangled methods of teaching." And it is most difficult for any educational institution to set up an experiment of this sort which is comprehensive and complete and has sufficient research techniques and control to guard it and to carry it along. It is difficult to get children who will act as subjects in an experiment of that sort without, of course, having it so biased that the results are of no value.

And so the fourth obstacle is to get the cooperation of the pupils. The parents may say, "Yes, it is all right for you to use Johnny and Mary for this sort of experiment." But John and Mary may say, "I don't like it. I would much prefer to be taught by text-books." And I run into Johnnies and Marys who in experimental conditions say, "Well, we have always been taught by text-books and I do not like this film business, or I do not like this slide business. Why do we have to have this?"

The fifth obstacle, of course, is to find a school with a staff and a group of parents

and a group of children where this kind of a practical demonstration can be conducted. If such a school can be found or created, with all of the various devices of visual instruction including the motion picture, silent and sound, the slide, the stereograph, the museum exhibit, the school journey and all the rest that goes with what we call reality in education, I have some hopes that it will not take long years to reach the day when the motion picture will be used in all of our classrooms, but that it will be really very near at hand.

Book Review

A small volume on visual education, by Dr. Leon H. Westfall, with the title "A Study of Verbal Accompaniments to Educational Motion Pictures" makes in its introduction the encouraging statement that after being subjected to scientific experimentation and critical observation for more than a decade, motion pictures as an aid to classroom teaching are now emerging with a definite stamp of approval from most educators. This change in attitude toward, and acceptance of, motion pictures, the book states, is naturally modifying the aims and methods of research connected with them. In the past much of the experimentation has been focused upon comparisons of teaching with and without the aid of films. Now the greater need is to determine the improved ways of constructing and using these films. Innumerable problems lie ahead. One of these is to determine the most satisfactory forms of verbal explanation that can accompany films and in this field the present study lies.

The statement of the acceptance of films in education is based upon facts and figures gained from experimentation and observation. Some sources quoted are the Cleveland, Ohio, Public Schools, the American Museum of Natural History, the Middlesex County, England, experiment, that of Dr. C. C. Clark of New York University and a series of high school experiments in Highland Park, Illinois.

Motion Picture Olympics

THE Second International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art held in Venice, Italy, in August was given in the press the popular title of "The Olympic Games of the Motion Picture." This was due to the wide participation and active interest of the different countries. An earlier issue of this Magazine carried an announcement of the Exhibition and our readers may be interested in the results, in which America stood well to the fore front.

The first and not surprising item to be recorded is that the Columbia film *It Happened One Night* won the prize for the most entertaining film. A Douglas Fairbanks British-made film *Private Life of Don Juan*, was considered the best world premiere. The world's best cinema performers brought honors back to America as Katharine Hepburn and Wallace Beery were the chosen two. And of course Mickey Mouse received a gold medal.

The outstanding prize of the Exhibition, the Mussolini Cup for the best foreign film, went to the latest Robert J. Flaherty film, *Man of Aran*. We have not seen this picture, as it has not yet been released in this country, but without seeing it we can add our acclaim knowing the merit of Mr. Flaherty's earlier films, *Nanook of the North* and *Moana*. Mr. Flaherty, an American, produced this film for Gainsborough Pictures, a British company, on a tiny island off the west coast of Ireland. Mr. Flaherty has this week returned to America and further word of this heralded film will soon be forthcoming.

The special study described by Dr. Westfall was conducted at Teachers College, Columbia University, and deals with fifth grade pupils in twenty-five classes. It is a detailed study and offers interesting proof and conclusions on a specific phase of visual education which will be of interest to all those concerned with the subject as a whole and its different problems and applications.

Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, \$1.50.

Pleasing All the People

By Martha Jethro

The balanced program like the balanced diet is much discussed these days. Do the theatre managers have the right idea in their assorted offerings is the question presented by Miss Jethro who has been a student of the motion picture, particularly in the courses in Photoplay Composition conducted at Columbia University by Mrs. Frances Taylor Patterson who is a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board of Review.

A gentleman checks his hat, coat and stick at the opera. "What is the program?" he asks the attendant. "Aida, preceded by the Four Marx Brothers, and followed by a lecture on Holland," is the answer. "Perfect!" exclaims the gentleman. "I should have brought the whole family!"

Before you protest that too much is wrong with this picture, including its implication that a comparison between opera and cinema is possible, imagine another scene. A lady is reading the announcement of a theatre first-night: "In addition to the feature production, *As Thousands Cheer*, the program will include the first act of Ibsen's *Ghosts*, and an arrangement of 'Chopsticks' for zither and second fiddle." The lady is delighted. "We shall all go," she decides triumphantly, "even Uncle Benjamin! He has always enjoyed 'Chopsticks'."

So much for fantasy. Here is sober truth, coming over the telephone wires one Saturday afternoon to Mrs. Green, from the box-office of the Palace Picture-Play House. "What are you showing this afternoon?" enquires Mrs. Green. "Clara Bow in *Hoopla*," comes the reply, "with a special Punch and Judy stage show, and a 'short' presenting Martinelli." If this assortment lacks charm for Mrs. Green, she may call the Cinemart, and learn that Mickey Mouse is sharing the screen there with *No Man of Her Own* and an excellent travelogue on Bali, or the super-splendid Central itself, where *Little Women* is being set off by a vaudeville conception entitled "Fizzes and

Flips of 1934," and a personal appearance of the Singer Midgets.

It is, of course, the fond hope of the motion picture exhibitor that Mrs. Green will conclude with delight that one of these ingenious combinations of opposites is just the program to inspire a family exodus to the movies. Elsie and Mother will love *Little Women*, and sophisticated Brother will find the chorus of "Fizzes and Flips" highly diverting. Or if Brother wins out, Clara Bow will scintillate for him alone while Elsie waits for the Punch and Judy and Mother looks forward to Martinelli. There may be a protracted family council to decide whether it is worth sitting through *No Man of Her Own* for a short visit to Bali and ten minutes with Mickey. Father may suggest at this point that one of the newsreel theatres uptown is showing the Bali film, and probably Mickey, without benefit of *No Man of Her Own*; why don't they all go there?

Eventually the Greens do exactly as the exhibitor hoped, although for somewhat less deliberate reasons. Brother happens to be a more persuasive pleader for his feature than the rest, and no more pleasing alternative is at hand. Thus they select one of the mixed grills, and each member of the family, with patience and edification varying according to his lights, digests a great deal of spinach until his particular film tid-bit is served up. During the long program Brother develops an illogical aversion for all Punch and Judy shows, because this one has delayed the showing of *Hoopla* when his mood demanded, not Punch, but *Hoopla*; and after a jaunt along rhinestone runways with Clara, Elsie finds Martinelli a bit anticlimactic, although he seemed well enough over the radio. Mother wonders whether *Little Women* wouldn't have pleased every one, after all; but Father thinking of another item of that program, says that he is irrevocably opposed to midgets on any stage, and Elsie adds that even *Little Women* might not be worth enduring the Central's vaudeville. The Greens

leave the theatre in no ill humor, however. Like doughnuts, their movie programs are usually filling, if not satisfying as a whole.

This situation is peculiar to the motion picture alone, for neither opera nor theatre programs, obviously, are made up to please the whole family. If one were to press the exhibitor for his reasons in selecting the particular assortment of novelties which composes his average program, he would explain that the movies, because of their universality of appeal (unlike opera or theatre) must have . . . ah . . . must have . . . a universal appeal! Therefore the programs must be so varied that any member of the neighborhood audience finding himself inside the theatre will see something to his taste. If *The Guardsman* will not draw more than twenty percent of the exhibitor's customers, the universality of the movies dictates that the program include 'shorts' with comedy interest so low that the feature's subtle tone is forgiven, or a stage show with sure-fire mass appeal to lure the remaining eighty percent into the theatre.

If the exhibitor were right in his business calculations one would have less occasion to protest, although the merits of exceptional films are often tarnished by juxtaposition with novelties and vaudeville of utterly unrelated and contradictory nature. It is neither a new nor an entirely scandalous fact that film programs are primarily commercial and not artistic in origin. But one may very well question whether there is even business method in this form of madness. After all, a picture of the type of *The Guardsman* may still fail to be a universal drawing card despite the program shorts. The exhibitor assumes that the program sells the feature (although the audience invariably comes because of the feature alone); that the feature is unable to stand on its own feet; that the cinema bill must resemble the old-time vaudeville bill for variety (and not a theatre program for unity); that the combination of opposites somehow results in "universality." Is any one of these assumptions more than a rationalization of the status quo? This form of exhibitor's logic has seemed correct only because audiences are marvelously patient, and will continue to attend the films despite the programs offered, not

because a better logic in regard to programs does not exist.

The paradox inherent in motion pictures would seem to be that their producers must divorce themselves from theatre imitation, while their exhibitors might well learn a lesson from theatre showmanship. The commercial theatre presents its wares in their most salable form, stressing the particular appeal of each offering. If the motion pictures are to meet with universal approbation, they must be "played up" even more, by being supplemented with programs which help the feature out instead of toning it down or flatly contradicting its intent. Shorts and vaudeville can so elaborate and enhance the mood of a feature, or contribute to its setting or idea, as to increase audience appreciation and swell the ranks of paying customers. This need never result in monotony, nor does it require even at the present time a new production trend. There are suitable short subjects now for most of the major films; what is lacking is a good theatre juggler's hand to fit the right shorts to the right features. When the adjustment has been made the motion picture program will have a new artistic dignity, and undiminished, even accentuated, audience appeal.

Book Week

NATIONAL BOOK WEEK will be observed this year from November 11-17 and with the large number of books and published plays which have been made into exceedingly popular films during the past year, this annual observance will no doubt offer a number of instances for cooperation between libraries, schools, bookstores, Better Films Councils and local exhibitors. The National Board of Review, as has been its custom in the past, has compiled a list of all the selected pictures for the past year which have been adapted from published sources. This list may be obtained for ten cents from the office, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR
JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Films of the Early Season

WHETHER it is a result of the unexpected success of *Little Women*, or of the resurrected Code, there is a distinct trend toward the simple and homey in the early-season crop of films. Stories like *The Girl of the Limberlost* and *Peck's Bad Boy* are coming back yet again to the screen, and even the gangsters have shifted from toughness to the ripe-for-reform amiability of such harmless bits as *Hide Out*. Mae West has taken to interspersing her salty chansons with a spiritual and a plea against intolerance and misrepresentation, and Jean Harlow—though with no perceptible change of spots—is out with the utmost determination for nothing short of honest matrimony.

On the other hand, attempts to create adult screen drama out of the passions and conflicts of mature men and women have not been utterly abandoned.

There is *Of Human Bondage*—not actually new any more. It was originally a long novel, a hard job to condense and translate into motion pictures, something it took courage to tackle. The central problem of it is particularly difficult—to create sympathy and understanding for a fine and sensitive man's falling in love with a cheap, callous, unmoral waitress of no unusual physical attractiveness, and going on loving her, forgiving her and taking her back after almost incredible cruelties and infidelities from her. Even the novel, with its over six hundred pages, left many people in doubt about how such a thing could be, and it would be well nigh a miracle if the film were a wholly successful psychological revelation—which it

is not. But it is a brave attempt, and with the help of Leslie Howard and Bette Davis (a surprising Bette Davis) it reaches a level few films even aim for.

Crime Without Passion is also adult fare. It was made under practically Utopian conditions, such as directors and screen-writers and aesthetic film-critics dream of: Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur—working as one—wrote, directed and produced it, with no supervision and dictation. The result is interesting and worth seeing—the story of a man of brains who believes his emotions are completely under the control of his mind. Almost accidentally he commits a crime and coolly constructs the Perfect Alibi, till a quite irrelevant person pops up to trip him into a moment of fatal frenzy. The picture is made with a crafty eye to popular taste, many concessions to intelligence (and the priceless assistance of Lee Garmes at the camera), expert skill in using the motion picture medium and combining it with effective dialogue; but it lacks one precious ingredient—feeling. It is a film without passion, fundamentally. What bit of sympathy it arouses goes to the arresting personality of an actress new to the screen who lets herself be called Margot. Perhaps she may turn out to be the most memorable thing in the picture.

King Vidor has also taken a plunge on his own and made a picture with a good deal of importance as an attempt to treat an economical problem seriously, sincerely and without capitalistic prejudice. *Our Daily Bread* solves the unemployment situation by community farming. As an interesting solution it is considerably weakened by trite plot expedients that even the quickies of

Hollywood would hesitate to use and a hero who lacks both human and heroic qualities. Mr. Vidor appears to need someone to provide him with proper material and put it in expert order—without it the best of his powers as a director haven't enough to exercise themselves on. *Our Daily Bread*, with all its fine episodes, does not triumphantly live up to its good intentions.

British Agent is more notable for its signs that we have officially recognized Soviet Russia than for its dramatic content. Derived from a book purporting to be actual experience, it also has many cinematic derivations from the films of Pudovkin and Eisenstein. It attempts to combine the struggles of the Revolution against foreign (British) machinations with that old, old form of love story in which a spy falls in love with her enemy. A stirring revolutionary drama has very little room for such nonsense, and so the picture suffers. But it is nevertheless a picture worth seeing, and by its slightly broadened outlook, however confusedly presented, shows that Warner Brothers are still willing to concern themselves with films that have something to do with real, if controversial, conditions.

Two excellent screenings of books are now, or immediately, to be seen, *Treasure Island* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Stevenson's pirate story has never before been done with anything approaching the gusto and color of the new version, and lovers of the story can go to it in complete confidence that their favorite has been nobly dealt with. The temptation to let Jim Hawkins be tearful was apparently irresistible—Jackie Cooper has always been such a good crier—and the pull of the Beery-Cooper combination as a sentimental pair made a certain amount of sentimentality inevitable; but that is a small fault in the midst of so much lusty adventuring and romantic virility. *The Count of Monte Cristo* is also a stirring picturing of an old story—Dumas comes to life on the screen with nothing to jar Dumas lovers. Robert Donat is a fine Edmond Dantes, and the lively, colorful tale of how he avenged his wrongs has the picturesqueness of its bygone time, and the vivid freshness of a brand new story. It is one of the few costume pictures

in which the wearers of the costumes, though out of a world of romance, still seem to be real flesh and blood.

What they call costume pictures are having a noticeable revival: perhaps a spade does not seem so realistically a spade when it is flourished in the hands of people belonging to another day. There is *Cleopatra*—one of Mr. DeMille's finest productions but still genuine DeMille, with all that implies of grandiose spectacle and gorgeous pasteboard characters. Shakespeare took the love story of the Egyptian queen and retold it in the style of his own day—with his own genius presiding. Mr. DeMille—and who shall say him nay?—has done the same. *The Scarlet Empress* is Mr. von Sternberg's version of Catherine the Great—and that also has its implications. A thrilling pictorial orgy, it keeps somewhat closer to history than the more sedate film in which Elizabeth Bergner so effectively invented unheard-of virtuousness in the young empress; but its human values are pretty well lost in mass movement and bizarre interior decoration. The cast, too, is strangely assorted, with some of its principals more funny than effective in their parts and the fascinating Dietrich pathetically puppet-like. But the film, for many reasons not intended, is vastly entertaining.

Two engaging pictures with music show delightful progress in the field of romantic operetta—which the screen, except in Germany, has never done particularly well by. The poorest thing about *One Night of Love* is the title, one of those fancied box-office pullers which gives no hint of what the picture really is. The story is ordinary enough in plot, being concerned with the rise of an American girl to operatic fame, but it is handled pleasantly, and it has the unheard-of advantage of starring a singer who can really sing. The music—which ranges from a banal theme-song (not plugged to any unfortunate extent) to the best of Verdi, Bizet and Puccini—is far and away the best, and the best done, that the screen has yet offered. Grace Moore's voice is remarkably well reproduced, and the finale is a splendid and moving climax. *Love Time*—another sappy title but it will lead no one astray—is a romantic version of Franz Schubert's youth,

charmingly idyllic and studded with happy renditions of some of Schubert's best-loved melodies.—J. S. H.

Junior Opinions

SOME of the recent motion pictures have brought interesting opinions from members of the Young Reviewers Club—the organization of children ranging in age from 8 to 15 years, sponsored by the National Board of Review. The members of the Club review pictures, filling out ballots and holding discussions under their own leaders which results in their voicing their reactions with much more frankness than one might expect.

Jane Eyre was reviewed by a group which averaged about 14 years of age. The majority considered it above the average picture and all but one selected it for the family audience, the dissenting vote being cast for the mature audience. A girl of 12 years thought it a "clean, fine picture," and this opinion was unanimous, although a boy of 15 added, "the acting was very unnatural at times." Jane's courage through all her hardships seemed to hold the most interest for all.

The Defense Rests, a picture concerned with a brilliant but unscrupulous criminal lawyer who met his Waterloo when he undertook to defend a kidnapper, was recommended for the family audience with the stipulation that young children would not understand the moral since "it was supposed to have a moral" as a young lady of 12 put it.

Beyond The Law, dealing with a railroad detective's hunt for train robbers, was voted uninteresting for an audience over 12 years but good fare for the younger children. "This picture had too much of the old-fashioned action in it and would probably find its place only with cowboy pictures. The hero does difficult things with the greatest of ease," was a 14 year old boy's opinion.

Whom The Gods Destroy was rated far above the average picture but it was recommended for the mature audience in that it would be most interesting and most understandable to grown-ups—they thought that the picturization of the star's thoughts would

be confusing to children and young people. A 13 year old boy said, "This picture is excellent for adults but the excitement of the story would throw young children off the track," while a 12 year old girl opined, "There were very fine attempts made in the acting but the story was a little far-fetched."

Treasure Island received the Young Reviewers highest praise. The whole group was unanimous in the opinion that it was excellent. Some of the remarks were: a 13 year old boy, "The picture was very interesting and excellent. It was far better than the average picture because besides being entertaining it was instructional. We should get other pictures like this which are not only entertaining but instructional;" a 10 year old boy, "I liked the book better than the picture because it was more explicit but this picture stuck more closely to the book than most pictures from books" (there was dissent from others of the group who had read the book as they all thought the picture was much more vivid than the book); regarding this book-picture discussion a little girl of 12 said, "high school students as a whole wouldn't like it as much as younger children because last year the book was on the prescribed list and nobody liked it," but a 15 year old boy wisely answered this with, "that was because they had to read it—if they had read it of their own free will they would have liked it," while a girl of 12, "liked it better than any book I've ever read." A boy of 15 thought, "Of all the books made into pictures this comes closest to the book." As to what they liked best in the picture—a 15 year old boy, "The fight between Jim Hawkins and Israel Hands because it was exactly as written in the book"; 12 year old girl, "I recommend as the best part where Jim Hawkins kept his word of honor with John Silver even when he knew Silver was crooked"; another boy of 15, "What I liked especially about this picture was there were no fat parts—just because there were famous actors in it they didn't pad the parts for them—they had just as much of a part as the book gave"; a 10 year old boy, "I think the music made the picture more interesting"—they all agreed to this.

(Continued on page 16)

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

A tie-up of particular interest to Better Films Councils conducting junior review activity or cooperating in a program of high school motion picture appreciation study, has been announced in connection with the picture *Cleopatra*. This picture was selected by the National Board Review Committee for the family audience as shown in the Selected Pictures Guide on page 2 of this Magazine. Your local exhibitor may approach you on this subject when he shows the picture but if not we suggest getting in touch with him in regard to the plans which have been worked out for the campaign.

Paramount Pictures will enlist 10 million high school and college students between the ages of 16 and 21 years in a study and discussion of the treatment of history in motion pictures, in one of the most extensive campaigns ever conducted to stimulate motion picture appreciation. Selecting Cecil DeMille's current *Cleopatra* as the subject they have arranged a country-wide project so that exhibitors everywhere may engage in it. The film's release date is October 5th. The contest will be in the hands of the teachers of the contestants and its results will be judged by a committee composed of Robert Hutchins, president of Chicago University; Richard Waldo, president and owner of McClure's Syndicate; Francis Taylor Patterson, instructor of Photoplay Composition at Columbia University; Lee Hanmer, director of Recreation, Russell Sage Foundation; and Mr. DeMille. The *Cleopatra* contest will be based upon a study of the extent to which the motion picture dramatist is entitled to take liberties with history. Several \$500 scholarships will be used as an incentive.

Letters and a "Study Guide and Manual" are now going forward to 20,000 teachers of English in high schools and colleges. Newspapers and high school and college papers will be enlisted. Sufficient time will be allowed for individual research by the entrants who will submit essay manuscripts.

The last day for mailing the manuscripts will be December 31, 1934.

Supplementing the national contest will be regional, state or city contests on related subjects. These secondary contests are to be arranged by the individual theatres. Awards for the secondary contests are to be given by the theatres participating, with Paramount promising to tie-up the plan for any theatre that desires to promote a contest in its locality.

Entrants for the major contest may also enter any secondary contest. The plans have no connection with one another except that they have for their common purpose the idea of stimulating the students to proper motion picture appreciation. The English teachers in each school and college will receive the manuscripts from the entrants of their own school. These will be forwarded to the Paramount studio in Hollywood or to the home office in New York City. All manuscripts will first be read by a committee of teachers to weed out undesirable documents. Three best manuscripts will be chosen by the judges and the rewards will then be deposited at the college chosen by the winners. The money cannot be used for any other purpose than to further the winners' education.

Aside from every consideration of publicity or promotion, the contest is designed to bring to students of the country a definite idea of what goes into the making of an historical motion picture.

The "Study Guide and Manual," has 32 pages, its contents including:

1. A foreword by Cecil DeMille;
2. Factual background—extracts from Plutarch, Shakespeare, Dryden, Jones and others;
3. Suggested parallel readings on some of the principal dramatists who have in the past treated the Cleopatra theme, together with some of the parallels in language used in the DeMille script;
4. Directions in detail for participating in the contest;
5. A series of questions designed to bring out DeMille's purposes and ideals in hand-

ling the Cleopatra theme for motion pictures. The answers to these questions will be the "leads" for the writing of the essay, and will at the same time provide a better understanding of the changes in historical fact that were made in the production of the picture; 6. Suggestions designed to show how attendance at the photoplay correlates with school work; 7. A rapid account showing how frequently the Cleopatra theme has been treated in literature; 8. A list of books the reading of which will be useful in writing the essay; 10. Optional: critical comments of the film.

It is of especial interest to have as one of the judges Mrs. Patterson, a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board of Review and of the editorial staff of this Magazine who from her long experience in photoplay instruction is exceptionally well qualified to act in this capacity.

THOSE who say that junior matinees are waning in interest and that it is well nigh impossible to build audiences for them will find refutation of this belief in what Mrs. Fred B. Ross says of her work along this line. Mrs. Ross is Better Films Chairman of the Hackensack (N. J.) Woman's Club and Motion Picture Chairman of the Bergen County (N. J.) Council of Parent-Teacher Associations. Asked by us to report on her successful matinees she sends the following:

Three years ago the Hackensack Woman's Club and the Parent-Teachers Association of Hackensack started the Children's Saturday morning matinee. Since then there has been a gradual increase in attendance, until now we have from 1500 to 2200 children at each performance. This year Mr. Cooper, manager of our local theatre, and I obtained all available material relative to motion pictures, including the National Board of Review and Child Welfare Magazines and numerous other publications. We compiled a list for our entire year's program. A synopsis was made of each junior picture and all data pertaining to it was sent to our twelve sponsoring organizations for their Motion Picture Chairman's approval or criticism.

Permission was also obtained to place an attractive colored poster in each school of the coming matinee attraction. Every precaution is taken to insure safety and order at these performances. Boy and Girl Scouts, Junior Police, three police officers, one fireman and women chaperones assist a staff of ushers. One Boy Scout is stationed at each exit during the entire performance. A hundred-piece orchestra, composed of high school students plays each week.

We have tried to make appropriate recognition of all holidays. Hallowe'en we gave the children a party on the stage. About 150 participated in the Hallowe'en games and about 200 were present in costumes. The Teaneck Woman's Club, one of our sponsoring organizations, acted as judges, assisted by the applause of the audience. Armistice Day, our local Veterans of Foreign Wars with their Woman's Auxiliary, also sponsors, came in uniform and rendered a very impressive service. A short and appropriate poem was read, the entire audience saluted the flag, taps was played and a two minute silence was observed.

At Christmas the Fox Skouras Theatre donated toys and candy to 1500 children. All were requested to bring a stocking to the theatre. These were hung in the lobby to be distributed at our Christmas party. The Hackensack Junior Woman's Club assisted in the filling of them. An Easter egg hunt was one of our Spring activities.

Our desire in providing these special children's shows is to have the parents refrain from letting their children attend the adult performances, and we feel we are accomplishing this as is proven by the following record. During the children's matinee season about 100 to 150 children attend the Saturday afternoon adult showing, while during the summer season when the children's matinee is discontinued, about 1000 patronize the adult showing.

In order to have a successful children's matinee, the support of all local organizations must be obtained. It is also most important to have the complete cooperation of the parents, the theatre manager and the different Motion Picture Chairmen.

It is very essential that the children are shown a varied and interesting program. In

adhering strictly to this principle their interest will be diverted from the adult performance.

I might add here that it is most difficult to obtain the proper type of picture, meeting all necessary requirements, for a juvenile showing. It would aid us considerably if the motion picture producers could be made to realize the importance of filming more junior pictures. I emphatically believe the producers would, from a commercial angle, find this heretofore neglected branch of their industry a very profitable field.

Aye, aye, we add, will certainly be heard in support of Mrs. Ross' suggestion in this final paragraph.

A Better Films Council organized in the spring which is ready for active work this fall, according to its president Mrs. George H. Smith, is that of New Haven, Conn.

It is the purpose of this Council to unite in a common purpose several groups of the city interested in offering support to a program to provide better moving pictures. It is planned to work with united effort for the producing and exhibiting of the highest type of films, by studying motion pictures as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression, by bringing the best motion pictures to the attention of the public, by supporting the best motion pictures in the theatres, and by cooperating with local theatre managers in adjusting their motion picture programs to the entertainment of children.

As an initial step in the program the Council sponsored in one of the local theatres, a Friday night family program, composed of pictures suited to all members of the family.

The Council has a Speakers Bureau which is planning to send out speakers to various schools and organizations. The cooperating agencies embrace civic, religious, patriotic and educational groups as is obvious from the following list of organizations cooperating: Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Y. M. H. A., Y. W. H. A., New Haven Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, New Haven High School, Commercial High School, New Haven Woman's Club, West

Haven Woman's Club, New England Colony of Women, Auxiliary of the Children's Department of Peabody Museum, Civic Federation, New Haven Women's Church Union, Council of Churches, Mary Clap Wooster Chapter and Eve Lear Chapter of the D. A. R., New Haven County Council P.-T.A., New Haven Council of Girl Scouts, Southern New Haven Council of Boy Scouts of America, Child Welfare, Junior League.

It is anticipated that other groups interested will also unite with the Council and it is also planned to enlist the support of many persons as individual members.

THERE is no activity of a community Better Films Council which needs a greater understanding and a more tactful approach than that of theatre contact. What need to have a program or a goal if there is lacking a relationship with the theatre which makes this practical and possible. The chairman of the Better Films Council of Scarsdale, New York, Mrs. Earl T. Leaper, has wisely recognized this and has had experience in developing a most cooperative spirit between exhibitor and public, therefore what she has to offer on the subject "Securing Cooperative Exhibitor Contact" is both interesting and helpful. The following is from a discussion of thoughts and experiences which she made at the National Board Annual Conference.

The large chain theatre operator of today has learned, through bitter experience, that sound theatre operation is not based on rules promulgated by a home office, but that it is based, and very definitely so, upon the diligent study and application of an intelligent local manager toward the solution of his own specific problems. So we too must realize that the Better Films Chairman of each village and town in the United States, can only accomplish real results by striving to have as true and unselfish an understanding of the local exhibitors' problems as possible.

In Scarsdale, a little village in Westchester County, N. Y., just 22 miles from Broadway, we have a most ideal exhibitor contact, and this contact has been developed in the face of a powerfully active triple complex: highly organized schools, churches and

clubs, near proximity to Broadway, and the 100% commuter attitude. The practicing motto of Scarsdale in all its activities seems to be: Something must be done to improve everything, and if it is worth doing it must be done very, very well and very vigorously. So you who have stood the brunt of diversified opinion in the better films field can alone appreciate the cross currents we inevitably get into. But through it all I feel that our little committee has built up an ideal exhibitor contact.

It has been my good fortune in the last ten years to have been very closely associated with exhibitor and producer problems in both a local and national way. We feel that we have been able to squarely and directly approach our exhibitor. His problems are our problems, and our objective is his objective. We are a long time past the spoofing, selfish, tricky stages of cooperation. We do not pretend to own his business, nor do we tell him how to run it. We have a common single aim—a happy, active, progressive theatre community life. On the other hand we do not try to be the keeper of our neighbor's children or the neighbor himself. We do not believe in censorship; but we do believe in selection—broadminded, liberal and friendly—combined with truthful informative publicity and advertising. We believe in children's programs at least once a week.

The theatre today is on a convalescent status and we feel that it must be approached from this angle. It is getting back on its feet gradually and there seems little doubt but that it is going to be one of the most powerful and active mediums in our thoughts and activities, and by sympathetic and intelligent understanding in our cooperative efforts we of the Better Films Councils have the rare opportunity of building up hand in hand with the exhibitor to this powerful community position.

THE Better Films Council of Beverly, Mass., was very much interested in a questionnaire on motion pictures which was submitted to the high school pupils last spring. Mrs. William H. Griffin, the interested president of the Council, was consulted on the subject which was undertaken in the interest of photoplay appreciation and to

determine how often the pupils went to the movies, if alone or accompanied by a parent, what kinds of pictures liked best and why.

A report of results was given at one of their meetings by a member of the high school faculty. The survey showed that a majority of the pupils enjoyed comedy pictures, with romance second and wild west pictures third on the list. Out of the total, 113 attended the pictures once a week and 40 twice a week. It was found among the other points, writes Mrs. Griffin, that the pupils in the college preparatory course went less often and selected higher class pictures for entertainment than did those in the practical arts course.

It is the aim of this Council to enlist public spirited citizens in the work and to educate the people to their responsibility for good entertainment.

(Continued from page 12)

As to the audience classification it was unanimously recommended for children as well as grown-ups but the majority thought young people would like it best, a 12 year old girl's opinion being, "I don't think grown-ups will like it as well as young people because there is no romance in it. I think the adults would like it with an ending where Dr. Livesey goes back and marries Jim Hawkins' mother. You kind of got an idea that might happen in the first part of the picture;" but a 13 year old boy thought, "Older people will like it very much because they like the actors in the picture." A boy of 15 did not approve of the "whitewashing" of the bad man, "Silver was made too likeable at the end of the picture."

At one of the recent meetings a young miss of 12 on her own initiative had prepared an address of welcome for those who were attending a meeting for the first time. In this talk she said, "When you are called upon to give your opinions of these pictures speak freely and don't think your opinion will be held against you. If you do not express your thoughts at our meetings it will be impossible for us to know what type of pictures you enjoy most. We will not make any progress unless each individual contributes suggestions and helps carry them out."

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

DEMON FOR TROUBLE, A—*Bob Steele. Steiner.* Good story and acting, added to the usual fine scenery and riding found in Westerns, make this a thoroughly enjoyable picture. *Family.*

DESIRABLE—*Jean Muir, Veree Teasdale, George Brent. Story by Mary McCall, Jr. Warner.* The story of a successful actress' daughter, for whom her mother tries to make a fashionable marriage. A pleasant portrayal of a fine, unsophisticated girl up against worldly ambitions, directed with many amusing touches. *Mature.*

DRAGON MURDER CASE, THE—*Warren William. Novel by S. S. Van Dine. First National.* For those who like the type this picture is good entertainment—suave Philo Vance in his usual manner "assists" Sergeant Heath in solving the mysterious death of a young man who dove into a swimming pool and never came to the surface. *Family.*

FIGHTING THROUGH—*Reb Russell and Rebel Kent.* The star assisted by his intelligent horse, Rebel, succeeds in saving a girl and her ranch from the villain and his cattle rustlers. As usual excellent riding and scenery. *Junior matinee.*

***FIRST WORLD WAR, THE**—*Based on the book by Laurence Stallings. Fox.* A remarkable assemblage of newsreels, similar in effect to Stallings' book, covering the Great War. Being wholly pictorial, people must draw conclusions for themselves. The last reels, in particular, are extremely well put together. Suggested for schools and libraries, and church use; worth being kept permanently available. *Family.*

FOUNTAIN, THE—*Ann Harding, Brian Aherne. Novel by Charles Morgan. RKO-Radio.* Against a war background, a fine English officer is in love with the English wife of a fine German officer. It follows the plot of the novel carefully, without attaining its depth of character. *Mature.*

GIRL FROM MISSOURI, THE—*Jean Harlow, Lionel Barrymore, Franchot Tone. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A blonde of the "Gentlemen Prefer" calibre (fairly guttersnippish), starts a career on the principle that virtue is the best policy and proves it against big odds. Interesting Anita Loos character and a very movieish plot, with a lot of amusing comedy. *Mature.*

GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST, THE—*Marian Marsh, Louise Dresser, Ralph Morgan. Novel by Gene Stratton Porter. Monogram.* The difficulties of a girl whose mother hated her until love and kind deeds finally softened all hardness of heart and brought happiness all around. *Family.*

HAPPY LANDING—*Ray Walker. Monogram.* Two border patrol pilots, amicable rivals for their general's daughter, capture some border bandits. Exciting in a juvenile way. *Family.*

HAT, COAT AND GLOVE—*Ricardo Cortez, Barbara Robbins, John Beal. Play by Wilhelm Speyer. RKO-Radio.* Unusually well acted and an entertaining picture in which a clever lawyer admirably succeeds in gaining an acquittal for a young boy wrongly accused of murder and at the same time solves his own marital problem. *Mature.*

HAVE A HEART—*Jean Parker, James Dunn. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A cleanly boy-and-girl romance, abounding in sentiment to which the comedy of Una Merkel and Stuart Erwin provide a cheerful accompaniment. *Family.*

HIDE OUT—*Robert Montgomery, Maureen O'Sullivan. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Very delightful and amusing picture cleverly acted by Robert Montgomery as a gangster who, when forced to leave town, takes refuge with a kindly farmer and his family. *Family.*

HUMAN SIDE, THE—*Adolphe Menjou, Doris Kenyon, Charlotte Henry, Dickie Moore. Play by Christine Ames. Universal.* Entertaining and amusing picture—the plot concerns a playwright who is always about to make good for his divorced wife and their four children. The cast is very good, especially the family of four. *Family.*

***JUDGE PRIEST**—*Will Rogers. From "Judge Priest" stories by Irvin S. Cobb. Fox.* Story of humor and romance in the post-Civil War days. Interesting episodes in the lives of Judge Priest, his nephew, the girl next door and the citizens of a small Southern town. The acting is excellent and that of Henry B. Walthall outstanding. *Family.*

KING KELLY OF THE U. S. A.—*Guy Robertson, Edgar Kennedy. Monogram.* A singing actor from the stage in a picture that follows the pleasant traditions of comic opera in its singing, romance, comedy and mythical kingdom. *Family.*

LADY IS WILLING, THE—*Leslie Howard, Binnie Barnes. Columbia.* A French farce adapted by an American musical comedy writer and acted by an English cast, about how a crooked financier was made to repay some of the folks he had swindled. Light and a bit fantastic, with many diverting details. *Mature.*

MAN FROM HELL, THE—*Reb Russell and Rebel Kent.* With a personable hero, a former Northwestern U. football star, and his beautiful white horse, this Western following the usual formula, will prove entertaining fare for the juvenile audience. The title refers to a prison term for a crime which the hero naturally did not commit. *Junior matinee.*

MILLION DOLLAR RANSOM—*Edward Arnold, Phillips Holmes, Mary Carlisle. Story by Damon Runyon. Universal.* A wealthy young man has himself kidnapped to prevent his mother from marrying a fortune-hunter but finds that he is playing with fire. Edward Arnold gives a good performance as the reformed "big shot." *Family.*

MOONSTONE, THE—*David Manners, Phyllis Barry. Novel by Wilkie Collins. Monogram.* An effective screening of the fine old detective-mystery classic, modernized. *Family.*

NAME THE WOMAN—*Richard Cromwell, Arlene Judge. Columbia.* A kid reporter, mostly through lucky blundering, solves a murder mystery. Unsophisticated melodrama, made of well-known ingredients. *Family.*

NOW AND FOREVER—*Gary Cooper, Carole Lombard, Shirley Temple. Paramount.* Shirley Temple again walks away with the honors—in this picture she succeeds in changing her father's outlook on life through her theory that everything must be "honor bright." *Family.*

ONE MORE RIVER—*Diana Wynyard, Colin Clive, Frank Lawton. Novel by John Galsworthy. Universal.* A slow moving but interesting production about an Englishman who sues his wife for divorce. The acting is very good but the court room scenes seem too long drawn out. *Mature.*

*ONE NIGHT OF LOVE—*Grace Moore, Tullio Carminati. Columbia.* An exceedingly fine picture with Grace Moore giving very thrilling renditions of several operatic selections. Beautifully produced and excellently acted, the picture has a great deal of humor woven into the story of a singer whose teacher's efforts to keep his attention strictly on her voice almost make her abandon her career. *Family.*

OUR DAILY BREAD—*Karen Morley, Tom Keene. United Artists.* An interesting experiment of the unemployed going into cooperative farming. An earnest and often beautiful and thrilling picture on an important social theme. Different and commendable. *Family.*

PECK'S BAD BOY—*Jackie Cooper, Thomas Meighan. Novel by George W. Peck. Fox.* A modernized version of a classic of boyhood, carefully and effectively done. *Family. Junior matinee.*

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, THE—*Francis Lederer, Joan Bennett, Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles. Play by Lawrence Lerner and Armina Marshall. Paramount.* Pleasant comedy-romance, laid in a Connecticut village during the Revolution, with a charming run-away Hessian for a hero. Very prettily done, and a good part for Francis Lederer. The "bundling" element amusingly and delicately handled. The historical atmosphere excellent. *Family.*

ROMANCE IN THE RAIN—*Victor Moore, Roger Pryor, Heather Angel. Universal.* A press-agent who created a Cinderella for publicity and how she got too much for him. As incredible as a musical comedy but lively and amusing, with Victor Moore quite funny in his first important screen part. *Family.*

*SERVANTS' ENTRANCE—*Janet Gaynor, Lew Ayres, Walter Connolly. Novel by Sigrid Boo. Fox.* The story of a rich girl who had to learn to work—which gives no notion of the charm

and novelty with which the story is developed. Not only for Gaynor fans but for all who like pleasant romance tinged with freshness and intelligence. *Family.*

THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW—*Frank Morgan, Elizabeth Young, Binnie Barnes. Novel by Ursula Parrott. Universal.* An interesting story dealing with a family of sophisticated children, a mother who neglected her husband for their children, and a father who is only a figurehead in his own home. A splendid lesson for the thoughtless modern youth and the woman who allows her children to dominate her life. *Family.*

TRAIL BEYOND, THE—*John Wayne. Novel "The Wolf Hunters" by James Oliver Curwood. Monogram.* Western with a different locale—the Northwest woods of Canada. Plenty of excitement, gorgeous scenery, good riding and canoeing. An unimportant plot concerning a hunt for a lost girl and a deserted gold mine. *Junior matinee.*

*TREASURE ISLAND—*Jackie Cooper, Wallace Beery, Lionel Barrymore. Novel by Robert Louis Stevenson. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A faithful and spirited picturization of Stevenson's classic—the well-known characters come to life with remarkable fidelity and vividness. Splendid cast and production, and excellent direction. *Family. Junior matinee.*

WAKE UP AND DREAM—*Russ Columbo, Roger Pryor, June Knight. Universal.* Several tuneful songs and some good comedy make an entertaining picture of the story about a vaudeville team consisting of two pals, one with a fine voice and the other full of bright ideas, which always fail, of getting ahead, and a girl whom they both love. *Family.*

YOU BELONG TO ME—*David Holt, Lee Tracy, Helen Mack, Helen Morgan. Paramount.* A small boy, David Holt, gives a splendid and moving performance as the son of vaudeville troupers. His devotion to his mother and his stepfather gives him a difficult problem to solve. *Family.*

YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL—*Judith Allen, William Haines. Mascot.* An entertaining picture, with much amusing comedy and some singing and dancing, about a motion picture publicity man who builds up his fiancée into a great star by continually keeping her in the headlines. The 1934 Baby Wampas stars and Ted Fio Rito's orchestra also add to the picture. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

INFORMATIONALS

- DAMASCUS (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Radio. Family.*
 DECKS AWASH (World of Sports Series)—*Columbia. Sailboats. Family.*
 EYES ON RUSSIA—*RKO-Radio. Family.*
 *IN FAR MANDALAY (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox. Family. Junior matinee.*

MARCH OF THE YEARS NO. 10—*Columbia, Family.*
 *MARCHING WITH SCIENCE (Adventures of a Cameraman Series)—*Fox, Sun's eclipse, new aircraft, new huge telescope, etc. Family, Junior matinee.*
 MOVIE MEMORIES—*Vitaphone, Family.*
 PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NOS. 2 & 4—*Paramount, Family.*
 PATHE REVIEW NO. 6—*RKO-Radio, Family.*
 ROWING RHYTHM (World of Sports Series)—*Columbia, College crews, Family.*
 SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 1—*Paramount, Boston in 1907; high spots in Theodore Roosevelt's career, Family.*
 STRIKES AND SPARES—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Expert bowling, Family.*
 WATER RODEO (Spotlight Series)—*Paramount, Family.*

CARTOONS

AXE ME ANOTHER (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount, Family, Junior matinee.*
 BETTY BOOP'S LITTLE PAL—*Paramount, Family, Junior matinee.*
 BUDDY THE WOODSMAN (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone, Family, Junior matinee.*
 BUDDY'S CIRCUS (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone, Family, Junior matinee.*
 GIRL AT THE IRONING BOARD, THE (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone, Family.*
 JUNGLE JITTERS (Willie the Whopper)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Family.*
 MICE IN COUNCIL (Terrytoon)—*Educational, Family, Junior matinee.*
 MILLER'S DAUGHTER, THE (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone, Family, Junior matinee.*
 OLD PIONEER, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Family, Junior matinee.*
 *ORPHANS BENEFIT (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists, Family, Junior matinee.*
 *PECULIAR PENGUINS (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists, Family, Junior matinee.*
 THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER (Betty Boop)—*Paramount, Family.*
 WHY DO I DREAM THOSE DREAMS (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone, Family, Junior matinee.*
 YE HAPPY PILGRIMS (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal, Family, Junior matinee.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS

DUMB-BELL LETTERS NOS. 1-2—*RKO-Radio, Family.*
 GOOD LUCK—BEST WISHES—*Educational, 2 rls. The Pickens Sisters, Family.*
 GOOFY MOVIES NO. 8—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Family.*
 GUS VAN AND HIS NEIGHBORS—*Universal, 2 rls, Family.*
 HOLLYWOOD HERE WE COME—*Columbia, 2 rls. Arthur Jarrett, Family.*
 IF THIS, ISN'T LOVE—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls. Walter Woolf, Family.*
 LAW OF THE WILD, THE, NOS. 1-3 (Serial)—*Mascot, 2 rls. each. Rex, Rin-Tin-Tin, Jr. Junior matinee.*
 MADHOUSE MOVIES NO. 1—*Paramount, Family.*
 MIKE FRIGHT—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Our Gang, Family, Junior matinee.*
 MIRRORS—*Vitaphone, Musical, Family.*
 MR. AND MRS. JESSE CRAWFORD—*Vitaphone, Family.*
 MOUNTAIN MELODY—*Educational, Mountaineers singing, Family, Junior matinee.*
 NITE IN A NITE CLUB, A—*Universal, 2 rls. Mature.*
 NOSED OUT—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Irvin S. Cobb, Family.*
 OLD KENTUCKY HOUNDS—*Paramount, Dog actors, Family, Junior matinee.*
 POLICY GIRL, THE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls. Mitzi Mayfair, Family.*
 PROFESSOR GIVES A LESSON, THE—*Columbia, Mystery, Family.*
 RED RIDER, THE, NOS. 9-15 (Serial)—*Universal, 2 rls. each. Buck Jones, Junior matinee.*
 SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 12-13—*Columbia, Family.*
 SERVICE WITH A SMILE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls. Leon Errol, Family.*
 SHE'S MY LILLY—*Educational, 2 rls. Will Mahoney, Family.*
 SONG OF FAME, THE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls. Ruth Etting, Family.*
 STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 3—*Universal, Family.*
 SUPERSTITIONS OF THE BLACK CAT, THE—*Paramount, Origin of superstition, Family.*
 SYNCOPATED CITY—*Vitaphone, 2 rls. Hal LeRoy, Family.*
 YOUNG EAGLES, NOS. 6-12 (Serial)—*First Division, 2 rls. each, Junior matinee.*

Summer Selections

The following films are those selected during the early summer. They are listed for the readers who wish a complete file of the selected pictures.

FEATURES

ADVENTURE GIRL—*RKO-Radio, Family, Junior matinee.*
 BABY TAKE A BOW—*Fox, Family.*
 BACHELOR BAIT—*RKO-Radio, Mature.*
 BEYOND THE LAW—*Columbia, Family.*
 BLACK MOON—*Columbia, Mature.*
 CHARLIE CHAN'S COURAGE—*Fox, Family.*
 CIRCUS CLOWN—*First National, Family.*
 DEFENSE RESTS THE—*Columbia, Mature.*
 DR. MONICA—*Warner, Mature.*
 FIGHTING TO LIVE—*Principal, Family, Junior matinee.*
 FRIENDS OF MR. SWEENEY—*Warner, Family.*
 *GIRLS IN UNIFORM—*Filmchoice, Mature.*
 GRAND CANARY—*Fox, Mature.*
 *HANDY ANDY—*Fox, Family, Junior matinee.*
 HERE COMES THE GROOM—*Paramount, Family.*
 HERE COMES THE NAVY—*Warner, Family.*
 HIS GREATEST GAMBLE—*RKO-Radio, Family.*
 HOUSEWIFE—*Warner, Mature.*
 I GIVE MY LOVE—*Universal, Mature.*
 JANE EYRE—*Monogram, Family.*
 LET'S TALK IT OVER—*Universal, Family.*
 LET'S TRY AGAIN—*RKO-Radio, Mature.*
 *LIFE OF VERGIE WINTERS, THE—*RKO-Radio, Mature.*
 LOVE PAST THIRTY—*Freuler, Family.*
 MAN WITH TWO FACES, THE—*First National, Mature.*
 MAN'S GAME, A—*Columbia, Family, Junior matinee.*
 MIDNIGHT ALIBI—*First National, Family.*
 MOST PRECIOUS THING IN LIFE—*Columbia, Family.*
 NOTORIOUS SOPHIE LANG, THE—*Paramount, Family.*
 *OF HUMAN BONDAGE—*RKO-Radio, Mature.*
 OLD FASHIONED WAY, THE—*Paramount, Family.*
 *OPERATOR 13—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Family.*
 PARIS INTERLUDE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Mature.*
 PERSONALITY KID, THE—*Warner, Family.*
 SCARLET EMPRESS—*Paramount, Mature.*
 SHE LEARNED ABOUT SAILORS—*Fox, Family.*
 SHE LOVES ME NOT—*Paramount, Mature.*
 SHE WAS A LADY—*Fox, Family.*
 SHOCK—*Monogram, Family.*
 SHOOT THE WORKS—*Paramount, Family.*
 STAMBOUL QUEST—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Mature.*
 THEIR BIG MOMENT—*RKO-Radio, Family.*
 WHOM THE GODS DESTROY—*Columbia, Mature.*
 WORLD MOVES ON, THE—*Fox, Family.*

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

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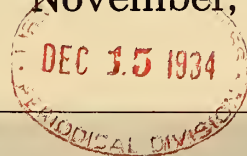
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The woman of Aran always looking out to sea for the boat that may not return (see page 8)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AGAINST THE LAW—John Mack Brown, Sally Blane. Columbia. A variant of the gangster story, with an ambulance driver for hero and the efforts of a gang to get control of a doctor's services as basis. Well done. Family.

BACK PAGE—Peggy Shannon, Russell Hopton. Pyramid. An agreeable romance of newspaper life, in which a girl becomes editor of a small-town paper and gets into conflict with an unscrupulous banker. A director whose name is new—Anton Lorenze—makes the rather ordinary plot into a pleasant and human picture. Family.

BIG HEARTED HERBERT—Aline MacMahon, Guy Kibbee. Play by Sophie Kerr and Anna Steese Richardson. Warner. Herbert bullies his family and fights against all their efforts to advance themselves until one night, before his guests, they live up to his boast that they are "just simple folks." Well acted and quite amusing. Family.

BY YOUR LEAVE—Frank Morgan, Genevieve Tobin, Glenn Anders. Play by Gladys Hurlbut and Emma B. C. Wells. RKO-Radio. A married couple, getting rather stale, go on separate vacations. Having more talk than action it seems a bit long, but contains amusing characterizations by Frank Morgan and some of the players of lesser roles. Mature.

CARAVAN—Charles Boyer, Loretta Young, Phillips Holmes, Jean Parker. Fox. Lavish romance with a great deal of music—on a huge Hungarian estate, at wine-harvest time when the gypsies come to play, comes a love entanglement involving a Countess, a lieutenant,

ant, a gypsy violinist and his sweetheart. Tuneful and picturesque. Family.

CASE OF THE HOWLING DOG, THE—Warren William, Mary Astor. Novel by Erle Stanley Gardner. Warner. A mystery story that holds the interest through surprising developments and detective methods more than through rousing sympathy for any of the characters. Mature.

***COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, THE**—Robert Donat, Elissa Landi. Novel by Alexander Dumas. United Artists. A vigorous, faithful and engrossing screen version of the Dumas classic, about the sailor unjustly incarcerated who escaped from his island dungeon and returned as the Count of Monte Cristo to bring justice upon his enemies. Robert Donat particularly good in a good cast. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available. Family.

CRIMSON ROMANCE—Ben Lyon, Sari Marita. Mascot. An exciting picture which deals with the friendship of an American boy and a German boy who wanted to become an American citizen, and what the World War did to this friendship. Some excellent shots of 'plane manoeuvres. Mature.

CURTAIN FALLS, THE—Henrietta Crosman, Dorothy Lee, William Bakewell. Chesterfield. A friendless old actress does a final impersonation in real life, which clears up many difficulties in the home into which she insinuates herself. A fine vigorous performance in the good old manner by Henrietta Crosman. Mature.

DANGEROUS CORNER—Virginia Bruce, Merwyn Douglas, Conrad Nagel. Play by J. B. Priestly. RKO-Radio. The dangers of rousing sleeping dogs—in other words, looking too closely for hidden truths, shown in the relations of three couples and a fourth man. Admirably directed and acted, with dialogue far more graceful and sparkling than usual. Mature.

DUDE RANGER, THE—George O'Brien, Irene Hervey. Fox. A lively and more than usually entertaining Western, in which a young Easterner takes possession of the ranch he has inherited and finds trouble on his hands. Family.

FIREBIRD, THE—Veree Teasdale, Anita Louise, Lionell Atwill, Ricardo Cortez. Play by Lajos Zilahy. Warner. An extremely well built and well directed mystery drama, laid in Vienna, in which a well-known family gets involved in the complications arising from the death of a popular actor. Mature.

***GAY DIVORCEE, THE**—Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Alice Brady, Edward Everett Horton. (Continued on page 17)

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Dr. Ditmars Elected

IT is a pleasure to announce to our readers and to National Board of Review members the most recent addition to the Executive Committee, Dr. Raymond L. Ditmars. Dr. Ditmars needs no introduction here—his name, his activities and his works are familiar to millions—but in accordance with our practice in announcing new members of prominence, a brief biographical sketch is of interest.

Dr. Raymond L. Ditmars was born in Newark, New Jersey, on June 20, 1876, and after elementary schooling graduated from the Barnard Military School in 1891. Soon after, he obtained a position in the American Museum of Natural History where he remained for five years. Seeking more active work,

he then became associated with the New York Times as a reporter, and in an interview with Dr. William T. Hornaday, then Director of the newly formed New York Zoological Park, he established a contact which resulted in his becoming Curator of

Reptiles at that institution. Later he also took charge of the mammals, and has the official title of Curator of Mammals and Reptiles. He has been associated with the Zoological Park for thirty-five years.

Aside from his work at the Park, Dr.

Ditmars' principal interests are writing books and making motion pictures of various kinds of animals. Both record experiences in tropical countries. Much of the motion picture work has been detailed and scientific, relating to strange habits of little-known animals. He has prepared a series of forty-two reels entitled *Living Natural History*, embracing mammals, birds and reptiles. The arrangement of these reels is like the chapters of a book, presenting in story



Dr. Raymond L. Ditmars

form, fascinating stories of animal life from all parts of the world. He is the author of many books, including "Reptiles of the World," "The Reptile Book," "Snakes of the World," "Strange Animals I Have Known," "Thrills of a Naturalist's Quest,"

"Forest of Adventure," "Book of Zoography" and "Confessions of a Scientist."

Dr. Ditmars is doubly welcomed to the Executive Committee of the National Board because of his long and practical interest in the educational use of motion pictures, as is illustrated by his film studies of bird,

serpent, insect and animal life, a use which the Board has always insisted is of the utmost importance. In Dr. Ditmars' active interest the Board is assured of one more advocate of its position, and one of outstanding reputation. His participation in the Board's work and his counsel will prove most valuable.

The Genesis of a Motion Picture

With so many motion pictures being adapted from books at the present time there will undoubtedly be a particularly close tie-up between motion picture and book interests during National Book Week, to be observed this year November 11th to 17th. In this connection we felt it would be of interest to our readers to learn something of the methods used in converting books into motion pictures, and so we asked RKO-Radio, the company which made "Little Women," one of the notable adaptations of the past year, to tell us of this procedure.

THERE is one story of Hollywood that has never been told. It is about one of the most interesting, most colorful phases of the motion picture industry. Because it has never been discussed it has never been named. For lack of anything better we will coin one . . . Hollywood Espionage.

On the surface Hollywood is peaceful and serene. The studios go quietly about the business of making pictures. Contrary to common belief they are not chests of carefully guarded secrets. Publicity departments tell the world nearly everything that goes on behind the closed gates.

The friendliest of relations exist between studios and studio executives. They meet the problems of the industry together. They cooperate. They show competitors' products in their theatres. They do everything possible, in united endeavor, to produce better pictures for the public's entertainment. New discoveries are passed on for the general good. New inventions and processes are made available, with fair compensations of course, to all.

On the surface all is serene. But all is not on the surface. Underlying the quiet calm of the picture industry is Hollywood

Espionage. This is not, as the term might imply, a pirateering system that employs spies in rival studios to ferret out and report secret plans. It is not that petty. Nor is it underhanded. Although not on the surface exactly, it is on the level. It is a vital factor in the keen competition that exists between studios in their frantic search for picture material. To an extent this includes players. It is, however, story material to which we specifically refer.

Players are plentiful enough. There are enough stars for all studios. The pulling power of a star is a known value. Box office records establish that. Story material is another matter. The public also establishes story values, but, unlike the values of players, they are not constant. A star can retain popularity over a period of time, even with an occasional bad picture. A bad picture, on the other hand, irrespective of the player, will not pay its costs.

It is the old problem of the variable factor, fancy, that has always been a disconcerting part of the human equation—the factor that keeps business executives as well as motion picture producers on the doubtful seat in their indecision as to what will, or will not, meet with public favor.

It has been said that a man who could pick one from a hundred stories as successful picture material, would be very valuable to any studio, and that anyone who could name one from ten in a projection room, would be invaluable. Whether this be true or not, it remains that estimating audience reception, even after all of the formulas and history available have been applied, is

nothing more than an estimate . . . a hopeful one.

The world public, the American public for that matter, has defied the bringing of its whims and fancies down to the mould of formula. Sociologists have explained the phenomenon of the fickleness of human fancy, but they have never advanced a solution that picture producers could utilize.

All statements to the contrary notwithstanding, the picture producer has no other desire than to give the public what it wants in picture entertainment. Any other attitude would be a leaning toward financial suicide. Still in a quandary, however, the producer has adopted the only possible means at his command, other than sheer guess work, to measure the quality of the public wants. He has gone to those sources of literature and drama that the public has stamped with approval.

These sources fall into two classifications. They are the great, almost unfathomable quantity of literature and drama of the past, and the current literature and drama of the day. Of the two, the latter is of the more vital importance to producers. This is true, probably, because contemporary work expresses the mood of the day, the trend of the times, and therefore can be assumed to be of immediate interest.

Because current material is of first interest to the picture executive, we make it of first interest here. Then too it is of first interest, because it is the frantic scramble of Hollywood for the best of the present day's works that is responsible for the far flung spy system that Hollywood has set up . . . for Hollywood Espionage.

It reaches to every corner of the world. There is nothing that happens in the world of literature or drama that isn't known in Hollywood twenty-four hours after it happens . . . sometimes before it happens. Hollywood literally follows the works of known authors from the original idea germ to the finished work. Synopses of ideas are often read before the authors touch pen to paper. Manuscripts of plays are read and galley proofs of novels are scanned, before the play goes behind the footlights or the novel between its jacket.

Cables and wires carry messages daily to Hollywood concerning a novel to be written by Sir James M. Barrie, a play by Noel Coward, a book from the pen of an unknown that is having an unusual sale in Germany, a play that is packing them in in Russia. Be it in London, Berlin, Rome or Timbuctoo, the studio representative is on the job and the information is in Hollywood the next day.

So under the calm exterior of Hollywood, a friendly battle royal is being waged . . . a battle for the possession of the most likely story material in the world . . . for the cream of the crop.

In spite of the anxiety to secure the best available property, as books and plays are called in the parlance of the studios, in spite of the desire to scoop competitor studios, the contest is still spiced with executive indecision. It is spiced with indecision, because the public has on occasion proved fickle. It has said at the book stalls: "We like such and such an author." The book has sold heavily. Yet as a picture play it flops dismally. The audiences of two continents have patronized a play and have turned thumbs down when it was adapted as a motion picture. So, although Mr. Producer wants to get the best, he is very chary about buying a flop. He waits for the indication to assure him and often, when he has made up his mind, he finds that another studio made up its mind the day or the hour before. It's a great game, this Hollywood Espionage.

Information concerning picture material is one thing. An option to purchase is another. An outright purchase of a property is another. To find the material that will make a good picture, is not the only problem.

As has been said, every studio has stars, contract players. These must be kept busy and they have peculiar histrionic abilities and dramatic limitations. The stories must fit these abilities and limitations, or possess enough flexibility to permit tailoring to specifications of the luminaries. It follows that a story with outstanding picture possibilities may be found and yet be totally unfitted to any player in the employ of the

studio, or any player available. In some instances, this may apply to the entire industry. Often properties are purchased and shelved in the hope that some day the right players for the roles will come along.

When a story is purchased, in the great majority of cases, it is bought with some one or two stars in mind. In very rare instances are subjects for pictures selected arbitrarily without first consideration for casting. There are those subjects, however, that in themselves are of such magnitude that they automatically relegate personalities to second place. Of these is the new Merian C. Cooper production, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, now in preparation.

We have pointed out two sources that are scanned thoroughly for potential picture material. Of first importance we have said, are current literary and dramatic works. All literature suitable for picture purposes, however, wasn't written in the last year. Knowing this full well, studio executives are constantly delving into the past. There comes to the screen frequently, great pictures from out of the past, pictures that have been lying undiscovered for years. Sometimes they come in their periods. Sometimes they come in modernized form.

RKO-Radio brought a screen masterpiece to the world when it made *Little Women*. Katharine Hepburn, who rose to the full measure of her screen greatness in the Alcott classic, is about to bring another to the screen. It is *The Little Minister*, filled to the brim with the living whimsy of its famous author, Sir James M. Barrie. *Anne of Green Gables* is still another that has been dug out of the past by Radio producers. With it the studio has created a new star. She is little Anne Shirley, Anne spelled with an E, who changed her name to that of the character she plays in the L. M. Montgomery novel.

Considering the varied and far-flung fields from which screen plays spring, and the great welter of material that must be sifted out before a potential gem of the cinema can be born, it should be interesting to take a look at the machinery that the studios have set up to sort it out.

It goes without saying that somewhere

along the line there is a set of brains that is a cross between a literatus, a showman, a dramatist, a sociologist and an economist. The latter, because financial limitation is but another of the thorns with which producers must contend. This set of brains happens to be located in the head of the story editor. If it isn't located there, he isn't the story editor very long. This gentleman is, in a practical sense, the neck of the bottle. Everything of a story nature comes to him. If it has picture merit, in his estimation, it passes through him to the executive committee.

The connings of the Hollywood Espionage, the search of the staff of story readers that he employs, come to the story editor. They usually come in the form of synopsis. From a synopsis he gains his first impressions of story merits. Those that apparently have nothing are discarded or filed. Those that show some spark of promise are held for more information. If a work seems particularly meritorious, he reads the manuscript, the novel or the galley proofs. From this great welter of material that may aggregate 100 synopses a day, he may send through a dozen a month for the consideration of the executive staff.

It is not to be understood that all of his recommendations are accepted. Nor is it to be understood that those stories he turns down receive no further consideration. Many a picture has been successfully made that the story editor rejected. In all fairness to him, some have been made above his veto that should never have been made. It is further not to be understood, that he and his staff are the only ones connected with the studio who are story minded. Everyone is on the still hunt for the great screen masterpiece of the century.

Who decides whether a story shall be made into a picture? It usually takes the enthusiasm of but one executive to effect the purchase of a property. It is the same here as in any other commercial enterprise. The real responsibility for the success or the failure of the product is located on the top of the desk of the head official.

The next step after the purchase of a property is the assignment to a producer.

In many instances the producer brings the property to the attention of the studio and automatically becomes its sponsor and supervisor. He is literally a production manager. As such his first job is to select or take the writers that are assigned to him and adapt the material to fit the screen. We said that stories were usually purchased for specific stars. If a property is acquired for instance for Ann Harding or Irene Dunne, it is supposed to have qualities and qualifications suitable to that star. Sometimes these dramatic elements are in an under-developed state. Sometimes stories require considerable revamping. Often new parts have to be written in. Not infrequently, whole sequences have to be deleted and new ones added. Usually a star's part has to be built up and supporting players parts written down so the star will not be outshone.

The term story conference may not be a common one to the world. To Hollywood it is byword. The story conference usually includes the producer, his writers, the director and not infrequently the assistant director, the script girl and studio executives. In story conference the fate of the narrative is decided. It is finally submitted in script form to the executive committee. Here further changes are suggested. Perhaps the whole manuscript is thrown out, to be rewritten by different scenarists. It may even be shelved. Otherwise, it is eventually approved.

In the meantime the hard-boiled financial arm of the studio has been at work and long budget conferences supplement the story conferences. Cuts may be made in the story for reasons of economy. In the meantime, also, the producer has selected his director. Together they have selected a cast. The art director and the costume director have been in huddles with the producer in regard to the dressing of the picture and the sets. Finally, the picture goes to the cameras.

When the cameras start to grind, the responsibility for what comes out the other end of the box is the director's responsibility. But it's also the producer's. If it's a good picture, he's great. If it's a flop, he takes the rap.

From the cameras to the cutting-room is the next step. This is a series of conferences in projection room in which the producer, the director, the film editor, the musical director, the sound man and the cutters, take part. The process may last a week, two weeks, or a month. Possibly more. Between conferences, the cutters arrange and rearrange as decided by the jury. The director is usually the king pin. Sometimes the producer takes the helm. Finally, the executive staff takes a look and then the picture goes out to the public.

Motion Picture Study

THE attention which is being given to the study of the motion picture in colleges and schools throughout the country is most encouraging. The new school year finds an agreeable extension of this activity. The work is conducted in different ways by different study groups but always with the same aim, that of a better understanding of the motion picture medium and a building toward more discriminating audiences among the young people. Four activities along this line have been brought especially to our notice recently. There is the outstanding course entitled "These Changing Movies" given at New York University.

This course under the School of Education plans to present in compact form many of the important aspects of the motion picture and its problems, illustrating most of them by showings of actual films, both silent and sound. What is the organization of the industry and what are its problems? How are motion pictures produced and what are the problems involved? What is good photography both from a commercial and from an experimental standpoint? What is good direction? What are the critical standards by which one may judge the artistic excellence of an entertainment film? What are the trends in the development of the more strictly artistic and creative films? What are the special problems of acting for the cinema? What are the recent trends and experiments in the development of the cinema as a new art form?

(Continued on page 13)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Man of Aran

Produced, written, directed and photographed by Robert Flaherty with the collaboration of John Goldman and Frances H. Flaherty; assistant director, Pat Mullin; special musical score based on Irish folk songs by John Greenwood; distributed by Gaumont British.

Characters

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Colman ("Tiger") King..... | a man of Aran |
| Maggie Durrane..... | his wife |
| Michael Dillane | their son |
| Pat Mullin | |
| Patch Ruadh (Red Beard) | } shark hunting crew |
| Patcheen Flaherty | |
| Tommy O'Rourke | |
| "Big Patcheen" Connely of | } curragh men |
| the West | |
| Stephen Durrane | |
| Pat McDonough | |

ROBERT FLAHERTY, with a Homeric strain in him that makes him create heroic screen poems about individuals who are personifications of their race, differs from the epic makers and saga singers of old by showing something in his heroes beyond valor in battle. Bloodshed is never the great proof of human courage with him—it is always some titanic force of nature against which man's strength is pitted, and the prize is not glory but life itself. So the Flaherty screen sagas (or epics, or whatever easy appellation comes to mind for descriptively setting them apart, as they must be set apart, from the usual motion picture) are something bigger than a record of victory or defeat, however glorious, in man's conflict with man—they celebrate and dignify that god-like thing in the spirit of man which fights against elemental chaos.

Man of Aran comes closer than *Nanook of the North* or *Moana* to the life we know

or our forebears knew, to our racial past. Nanook was an Eskimo, with cold and snow and ice and endless night to hack his living from: Moana, in an Eden of the South Seas, had hardly to more than reach out his hand for nature to feed him bountifully—both of far-away races, in far-away places. The nameless man of Aran is separated from us only by the generations that brought towns and machines and easy living to our own kind. He even speaks a language that is not foreign to us—he is ourselves when we had to feed ourselves, by our own hands, from the earth and the sea.

Flaherty tells no complicated story of this man, he simply—but with great eloquence—lets his camera show the daily routine events of the man's life on one of the sea-stormed isles of Aran; and those events are a profound and stirring drama, a promethean struggle of puny man against a vast and cruel welter of nature's wildest forces. The epitome of this struggle is caught and fixed again and again in pictures of the woman and boy against bleak land, vast threatening rocks or cloud-tossed sky, or of the man's boat continually lost to sight among heaving mountains of waves.

The heart of this man's life is the home in which we never see him. There the fire burns, the baby sleeps in its cradle, the hens with their chicks have shelter—and the wind comes down the chimney to warn of storm, and the woman is always being drawn to the window to search with her eyes toward the sea.

But even the woman is rarely seen in this warm nest, rocking the cradle or knitting, and always with an air of waiting. Mostly she is outside, dragging great loads of sea-



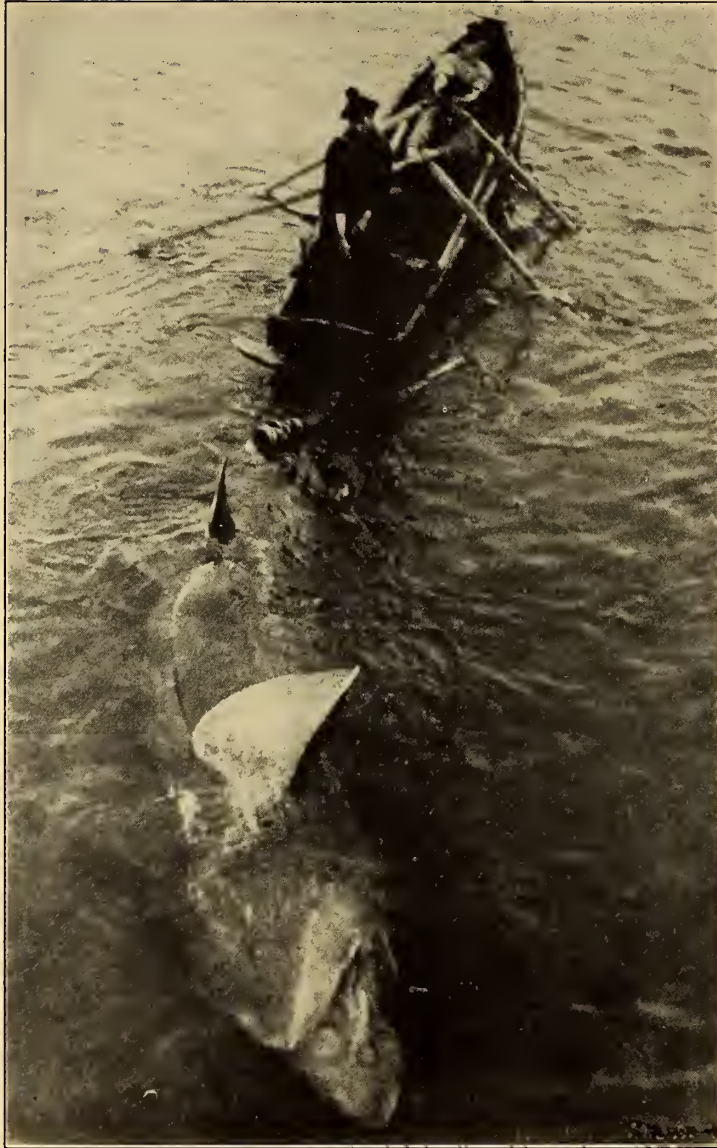
The great waves that beat on the shores of Aran, and the frail boat that has to conquer them.

weed for the making of soil for their meagre garden, boiling out shark's liver for oil to give them light, helping pull up the boat on the rocky shore or save the fish net from the pursuing waves. Always at work, she is the link between the wild world and the home, guarding it, keeping it ready for when her man comes in from the sea.

Never too far from her is the boy, learning the things he will have to do when he is a man. And the man himself goes out in the curragh, that frail canoe which is always having to be mended. His is the life that is in incessant danger. In the shark hunt (the one episode in the film that seems long drawn out and repetitious) death yawns at him in the gaping mouth of the harpooned monster and in the huge tail battering at the sides of the curragh. It is like the winning of a great battle when he wins to land in the storm that is the climax of the picture, leaving the shattered curragh in the clutches of the sea.

The whole effect is a heartening, thrilling effect of a unit of life—man, woman and child, the continuing link in the human race—winning survival in an unending war with the grim impersonality of the elements. It is beautifully planned, and magnificently done. It comes, probably, as near as one need wish for to pure cinema, a complete expression of its intention through the camera. Though sounds add immeasurably to its effectiveness—the sound of musical instruments weaving old Irish tunes into eloquent sub-commentary, and the different music of Irish voices, of gulls crying, of wind and roaring ocean—they really tell nothing that the camera does not show. A miraculous camera—how did mortal hand or eye manage to guide it in its long rides upon those shattering waves, or catch those huge mountains of water battering against the cliffs?

The film is a symphonic poem in pictures. As an instructive motion picture it is chary



*The Man of Aran
in
the long two-day fight
with the shark.*

of giving information that might be interesting: what community life there is on the Aran islands, what the boats are made of, how broken rock and seaweed help in the raising of potatoes. But the injection of such informative bits would interrupt the sweep of the picture-music, just as the few titles that are used interrupt it, in the fashion of pauses between the movements in an orchestral symphony. Actually they are no more needed than program notes when listening to Debussy's "Le Mer."

No actors, but natives of Aran live the lives that Flaherty's masterly camera has

caught and preserved. They are so real in the every-day simplicity of their actions that small as they are against their stupendous background they let show through them a spirit that dominates even nature. Their labors, exciting a sympathetic straining in a watcher's muscles, are exhausting to look at, but ever and again, and especially at the end, comes a deep, rewarding sense of rest after work done, but deeper still an uplifting feeling of pride in one's race, that simple mankind can be so quietly and invincibly brave.

—J. S. H.

Talking Picture as an Aid in Adult Learning

By EDGAR M. STOVER, M.A.

Research Associate, Erpi Picture Consultants, Inc., New York City

OF what value is the talking picture in the learning process? This is a question that educators have been asking of late. When the first educational talking picture was shown (1929), educators suggested that it had numerous possibilities as a teaching medium. They agreed that it could serve as an effective aid in learning, and could be of great assistance in teaching; they were convinced that it would add interest to study, and would stimulate self-initiated activities. Later when several series of educational talking pictures were produced, based on the suggestions of these educators, their enthusiasm increased. But many of them asked for experimental evidence to substantiate their conjectures. To furnish this evidence a series of experiments was planned, of which the one reported here is the first.

This preliminary investigation utilized a talking picture entitled *Individual Differences in Arithmetic*¹ which was made by Dr. Guy T. Buswell, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Chicago, as a vehicle for the training of teachers. The picture, twenty minutes in length, was based on the material contained in the monograph, "Diagnostic Studies in Arithmetic" by Buswell and John.² In the picture Dr. Buswell explains the techniques which he has developed for determining the arithmetical difficulties which school children encounter. The picture was made in Dr. Buswell's laboratory, and thus persons who see it can follow this eminent educator as he diagnoses a pupil.

The experiment was planned so as to measure the effectiveness of the usual forms of instruction given in teacher-training institutions as compared with these methods supplemented by the use of a talking picture. The experiment was conducted during a summer session at Teachers College, Columbia University, by Dr. Laura Krieger Eads, Research Associate, Erpi Picture Consultants, Inc., and the writer. The subjects, 238

in number, were members in four classes in educational psychology.

As was said before, the purpose of the experiment was to determine whether or not the talking picture as a teaching medium is superior to other means usually employed in the classroom—to wit: assigned readings, lectures and class discussions. In order to have a check on the results with the experimental group which saw the picture, a control group was used which did not see the picture, but followed the procedures of the experimental group in all other respects. Precautions were taken to see that these groups were equivalent with respect to mental ability, (as measured by the Otis test) and previous knowledge of psychology.

As an instrument for measuring the results of the learning, a test was devised which called for knowledge of Buswell's procedures. This test was not based on the talking picture; such a test would be unfair, since the students in the control group did not see the picture. It was, instead, based on the Buswell and John monograph which both groups of students read, and which furnished the material on which the picture was based.

The test may be briefly described as follows: Part I (Completion Test) consisted of eight statements to be completed: Part II (Graph Test) asked the student to represent, on given axes, the eye-movements which both a good and a poor pupil would make in adding a given column of figures; Part III (Multiple Choice Test) was composed of thirty-five multiple choice items, each of which had four alternative answers, one of which the subject was required to check.

If, on taking the test the students who saw the picture (experimental group) made no higher scores than the students who did not see it (control group) we might infer that the talking picture was of no more value than the ordinary classroom devices. But there was a difference!

Talking Picture vs. Assigned Readings: One group of students who saw the picture made a mean score on the test eleven points

¹ Produced and distributed by Erpi Picture Consultants, Inc., New York City.

² Buswell, G. T. and John, Lenore. *Diagnostic Studies in Arithmetic*. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 30, University of Chicago, 1926.

higher (the highest possible score was 100.) than that made by the group which did not see the picture. Both had read the monograph as a required assignment, though they had not discussed it in class. The fact that the group which saw the picture made a higher score on the test seems to argue that learning through the talking picture is better than merely learning by reading from a book.

Talking Picture vs. Reading and Class Discussion: In order to discover the value of the talking picture when used in connection with reading plus class discussion the picture was tested in a class which, in addition to reading the Buswell monograph, discussed it throughout the five class periods of one week. As in the previous phase of the experiment the class was divided into an experimental group (which saw the picture) and a control group which did not see it. When these students were tested, it was found that those who saw the picture made scores, on the average, almost nine points higher than those made by the students who did not see it.

Talking Picture vs. Lecture: Another variation introduced into the experiment aimed at discovering the effectiveness of the picture as a substitute for a lecture. A class was divided into two groups, one of which saw the twenty-minute picture while the other listened to a lecture on the materials described in the picture, which, it will be remembered, had been based on the scientific techniques discussed in the monograph. Despite the fact that a stenographic record of this lecture showed that the instructor had covered all the techniques, and had presented them clearly and forcefully, the group which saw the picture surpassed by four points the group which did not see the picture.

The data obtained under the three conditions just described permitted the experimenters to make other comparisons. In the first place, it was possible to determine how much time students must spend in reading in the library in order to make a score on the test which would be equivalent to that made by students who had only seen the picture. When this comparison was made, it was found that, on the average, students who had

spent more than two and one-half hours reading the monograph made a lower score than that made by those who observed a talking picture for twenty minutes and did no reading.

Again, the data shed some light on the relative value of repeated showings of the picture. Some of the students in the first experimental group saw the picture twice, others saw it only once. It was therefore possible to compare the scores made by these two groups. The former group made a mean score which was nine points higher than that made by the latter. Again the talking picture scored as an educational medium, this time by virtue of the fact that it can be shown time after time without fatiguing an overworked instructor.

The objective evidence accruing from these three phases of the experiment was supplemented by subjective reports gathered from questionnaires. The questions pertained to the nature of the help the students had received from the picture, i.e., concepts gained from the picture which they had not obtained from the reading of the monograph; whether or not the second showing had aided them; and if so, to what extent. The students were enthusiastic about the picture; they were unanimous in affirming that it had aided their learning to a great extent. Those in the experimental group, who saw the picture before taking the test, stated that it had clarified their ideas concerning the material which they had read, and that in addition, it presented details which they could not have grasped from either the spoken or the printed word. Practically all of them said that they had acquired additional concepts from the second showing. Those who served as a control group, and who did not see the picture until after the entire experiment was concluded, were certain that they would have made better scores on the test if they had had an opportunity to see the picture beforehand.

In summary, this experiment indicates that instruction given to adults via the talking picture is demonstrably superior to instruction given through the ordinary classroom methods. The talking picture constitutes a medium for the presentation of highly technical material which cannot be

presented so well in any other manner. It is a combination of lecture, discussion, and illustration and thus combines the values of all three mediums. It is thus advantageous to learners who need either visual, or auditory, or a combination of both kinds of stimuli. The talking picture makes for economy in learning and teaching since the twenty-minute picture gave students a better understanding of Buswell's techniques than that gained by spending two and one-half hours in the library, or by listening to an expertly delivered lecture.

What educational implications reside in these findings? Unquestionably, the talking picture can assist in improving the quality of instruction. Our results showed that the talking picture helped adult students to learn more facts and learn them more quickly than they could have done by the ordinary means of instruction. Furthermore, they learned them more easily. Everyone will admit that it is easier to watch an interesting picture and hear a synchronized explanation than it is to struggle through the fine print of a scientific treatise. And while we do not advocate the talking picture as a "royal road to learning," we must admit that in these days of arduous demands on learners we should do all we can to reduce the burden. All apart from humanitarian reasons, the use of the talking picture is dictated by considerations of plain common sense when we reflect that a student can learn more in twenty minutes with a picture than he can in two and one-half hours of reading—a saving of eighty-six per cent of his time. The adults who are crowding into our schools to further their learning want to conserve time.

Another striking implication in this experiment is that time and strength are saved for the instructor. While we do not entertain the notion that the talking picture will do away with the flesh-and-blood teacher, we can see that, in the hands of a wide-awake teacher, it can save him much time and effort. It will relieve him of the need for preparing certain charts and diagrams. It will obviate the necessity of his repeating the same thing many times, as he must in conducting reviews of certain subjects. The picture can perform this task even better

than he by virtue of its power to reproduce a thing time after time in exactly the same way. In an infinite number of ways we can see that rather than doing away with the teacher the talking picture will enhance the value of his services and permit him to devote more time to phases of instruction which only he can give, to improve his grasp of his subject and to give attention to the individual needs of students.

There is a new educational methodology evolving, based on the use of the talking picture. Public schools are adopting it in so far as their finances permit. Industrial establishments are using it in their programs of employee-training. It is certain that many other agencies fostering education for adults will adopt it and the results of our experiment give us ground for belief that they will find in it an economical, progressive, interesting means for helping adults to continue their education.

Motion Picture Study

(Continued from page 7)

The course will also give a complete presentation of the educational and social aspects of the motion picture, of both the entertainment and non-entertainment types, also illustrated by film showings. What methods have been proposed for the social control of the pictures? What are the pros and cons of censorship? What is the work of the National Board of Review? How are motion pictures reviewed and what are the standards set up for recommending them? How may the films be used for purposes of social education? How may motion picture appreciation be advanced by the public schools? What is the place of the motion picture as a mode of visual instruction in public school programs and in the more informal types of education? How may a program of visual education, utilizing the full contribution of the motion picture, be developed?

Subjects and speakers to date in the course have been "The Fields and Scope of the Motion Picture" by Wilton A. Barrett, Executive Secretary of the National Board of Review, and Associate Professor Fred-

eric M. Thrasher, of New York University; "The History of the Motion Picture" by Terry Ramsaye, Editor of the Motion Picture Herald, and author of "A Million and One Nights," a famous history of the movies; "The Problems of Motion Picture Production" by Harry M. Warner, President of Warner Brothers Pictures Corp.; "The Production and Direction of Photoplays" by Robert Flaherty, director of *Man of Aran** and other notable films. This course is accepted for credit towards the graduate degrees of the School of Education, as a free elective in all undergraduate curricula and a requirement in certain courses.

Teachers College of Columbia University offers a short course in photoplay appreciation coming on Fridays, October 19th to November 16th. The lectures are Introduction by Professor Allan Abbot; "Some Problems of Guidance in Motion Picture Appreciation" by Mrs. Mary Allen Abbott; "Standards of Adults and Children in Judging Films" by Mrs. Abbott; "Psychological Aspects of Motion Pictures, with Some Reference to the Payne Fund Studies" by Dr. Arthur T. Jersild; "Screen and Stage: A Comparison of Dramatic Principles and Techniques" by Professor Milton Smith; "The English Teacher and the Photoplay" by Dr. William Lewin, Chairman, Committee on Photoplay Appreciation of the National Council of Teachers of English; with a final Summary and Evaluation by Professor Abbott.

The particular motion picture interest at Bennington College in Vermont has been described to us in the following story:

In view of the increasing intellectual and artistic interest in the movie on the part of many people today, there has been organized at Bennington College an informal discussion group, the aim of which is to educate the taste of the modern movie-going public. The group is formal to the extent of having a chairman, who is a member of the faculty of the Drama Division of the College, and a secretary and a treasurer, who are students. Membership in the group is made up of any students or members of the faculty who are interested in

the subject. Meetings are held once a week, or more often if the need arises.

The group is asked to see, if possible, the outstanding movies which come to this vicinity, and at the following meeting the production is criticized and analyzed from all points of view: direction, acting, scenery, costumes, design, photography, etc. Students who are doing major work in the Drama Division and in photography are naturally interested in the more technical aspects of the show, and their discussion of it, which brings out points overlooked by the ordinary movie-goer, helps the lay members of the group to understand why and in what respect a particular movie is successful or ineffective.

In addition to discussions, it has been possible to obtain movies of special interest for private showing in the local movie theatre in town. This enterprise has proved to be self-supporting and the success of the experiment is now unquestioned. Last year *The Brothers Karamazov*, a German film, and *The Road to Life*, a Russian picture, were brought to Bennington; and this year Director Frank Murnau's first picture in this country *Sunrise* was shown. *Thunder Over Mexico* has been obtained for a date in November and plans for five other movies to be shown between now and June are being discussed.

A report from our affiliated New Orleans Council for Better Films, tells of the interesting work of a younger group.

The pupils of Howard No. 1 School are learning how to put "thumbs down" on worthless moving pictures. Teachers at the school no longer caution their pupils "Don't see this picture," and "Stay away from that one." Instead they train the children what to expect of a good movie then let them choose for themselves. This change in tactics was brought about with the inauguration at the school of a course in photoplay appreciation. The course is the first of its kind to be used in the public schools of the city and has become a definite part of the curriculum in the departmental grades of Howard No. 1. Classes in photoplay appreciation are held for forty-minute periods

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* See page 8.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

An Active City Council

ST. LOUIS is a city which can be rightly proud of its effective community-wide Better Films Council and an important factor in this effectiveness is the leadership of Mrs. A. F. Burt, president of the Council. Some idea of the extent of the Council activity can be learned from the following excerpts from the annual report sent by Mrs. Burt.

In framing the work of the Better Films Council when it was organized two and a half years ago, two courses of action were open to us—negative criticism and force or cooperation, persuasion and a constructive program. We chose the latter—cooperation with independence. By cooperation we mean the intelligent attempt to use the motion picture industry, through its organized agencies, for our purposes and to develop facilities to enable us to exert a direct influence on motion pictures at the source.

In order to equip the Motion Picture Chairmen with adequate machinery to do their work, five Reviewing Committees of five members each see the first showing of all programs presented at the first-run theatres. These five Reviewing Committees reviewed 284 feature pictures during the year and recommended 92 of them for the family; 281 short subjects were reviewed and found, with few exceptions, generally acceptable. Out of the 284 features reviewed 7 were definitely not recommended for anyone. When such pictures are released, letters are sent by the Council to the producers protesting the violation of good taste and ethics and to the artists expressing regret at their appearance in such pictures.

With stage shows running the entire year at two first-run theatres only 3 were not recommended. In one case a protest was made in regard to a black-out which was then eliminated. Managers of first-run theatres have been most cooperative in eliminating at the suggestion of the Committees

off-color jokes or bits in stage acts found objectionable, and in other instances suggestive scenes have been taken out of feature pictures. At no time has a theatre refused to grant these requests.

The reports of the Reviewing Committees are broadcast over KMOX each Saturday morning; they are printed in club magazines or bulletins; given out at meetings of member organizations; posted on 11 bulletin boards of libraries, Y. M. C. A., clubs, etc. These reports classify each picture for the various audience groups and according to its worth. This information is made available to all theatre owners and is used in building programs for Friday Family Nights.

With all theatres in St. Louis, outside of the first-run, using double-feature programs, and with 92, or about one-third of the product reviewed approved for family showing, it is necessary for theatres to draw on the pictures recommended for adult audiences to complete Friday Family Night shows. The Council requests the theatres not to show certain adult features either for Family Night or during the week-ends. Theatre owners granted these requests wherever possible to do so. Surveys prove that few children attend picture shows early in the week. Therefore our greatest interest continues in getting the theatre owner to inaugurate in his theatre Friday Family Night and to make careful selection of programs for week-end showing. Thousands of children enter the theatres on Sunday afternoons to remain until dark. Mothers cannot use picture houses as day nurseries and parking places for their children and then blame the industry for the faults inspired in the child.

The advertising of all theatres was checked during the year and 10 protests were made against advertising for first-run theatres which was deemed in 7 cases as misleading. Letters of appreciation were sent to theatre owners for the clean enter-

tainment presented in St. Louis theatres during Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays.

The report of Mrs. C. Lambur, general chairman of the Family Night Committees, holds interest and encouragement for the many other councils giving attention to the Family Friday Night program. She reports:

There are in St. Louis 48 neighborhood theatres cooperating with the St. Louis Better Films Council, endeavoring to show suitable programs on Friday nights for the entire family. Managers report an increase in Friday night attendance since cooperating with us. This should be of great satisfaction to parents as we urge and assist managers in choosing approved pictures. Until our organization was founded little attention was paid to the pictures for children. Today brings many calls for ratings on contemplated programs.

The present double-feature program makes a complete approved program difficult. However, we have been promised single-feature programs in the near future. Protests by the Chairman of the Family Night Reviewing Committees are made whenever necessary. Always we have received satisfaction wherever it was possible. Congratulations are offered whenever there is an exceptional program.

The average number of children attending Friday Night shows is 21,202 with 124,800 attending Sunday matinees. Plans are being formulated now as to procedure where managers are attracting children on Sunday afternoon with prizes. However, the desire on the part of the managers to show approved programs has been gratifying, and it seems when the parents assume their part of the responsibility of concern about the pictures their children see, we shall be able to assist 100%. There is a continuous improvement, and everyone can help by urging parents to allow their children to attend Friday Family Night programs, asking them also to listen to our radio broadcasts that tell of the pictures at first-run and neighborhood houses, given every Saturday morning.

The organization members of the Better Films Council of St. Louis and St. Louis County include many groups with educational, recreational, religious, literary and civic interests.

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once a week in the various departmental sections. A total of 532 students are enrolled.

Miss Josephine Thomas, principal of the school, has expressed her interest as follows: "For years we have had courses in the appreciation of art, the appreciation of music and the appreciation of literature but never a course in appreciation of the photoplay. Since children go to the pictures more than anything else, it would seem the most important appreciation course of them all. There's no use in saying 'keep children away from the pictures.' Until we find another pleasure substitute for Friday and Saturday afternoons they will continue to go. Nor is there any use in telling them 'Don't go to this picture, it's no good.' The minute you tell a child not to do something that's the time he's going to do it. Ours will be a positive rather than a negative education. Improving school children's taste in movies is a matter of education rather than boycott. The children will be given standards by which to judge. And if as a result of this course the boys and girls develop a finer sense of discrimination, they will of their own accord stay away from trashy movies."

If present plans carry according to the report the upper grades of Howard No. 1 will attend periodical previews of shows at local motion picture exchanges. Here someone connected with the profession will explain the good points of the pictures shown. Three or four times a year photoplay reviews will take the place of book reviews in the English class. Criticisms in newspapers and magazines will be studied closely and photoplays will be pigeon-holed according to the various age groups. A committee composed of parents and teachers of the school will attend the downtown shows every week, and report on what they consider good shows. An endeavor will be made to have neighborhood houses exhibit these shows. Thus in an unobtrusive way guidance will be offered at first.

The teachers report that the new course is taking "like wildfire" and that the boys and girls are so enthusiastic over it they are reluctant to leave when the bell rings.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

Musical comedy by Dwight Taylor. RKO-Radio. A gay, somewhat sophisticated comedy of the mix-up attendant upon a contemplated divorce. Sumptuous but not heavy as to production, tuneful music and a rare treat for those who like Fred Astaire's superb dancing and deft comedy. The rest of the cast is excellent, also. *Mature.*

GIFT OF GAB—Edmund Lowe, Gloria Stuart, Victor Moore. *Universal.* This story about a man who skyrockets to fame as a radio announcer serves as a means of bringing together a great number of radio and screen celebrities who do their part in making this an entertaining film. *Family.*

***GREAT EXPECTATIONS**—Phillips Holmes, Henry Hull, Florence Read, Jane Wyatt. *Novel by Charles Dickens. Universal.* Dickens' story of Pip and his convict benefactor, and the little girl brought up to bait men by her strange benefactress. The film has the fascinating, sometimes gruesome, theatrical effectiveness of Dickens' melodramatic tale, and a good cast of players. *Suggested for schools and libraries. Family.*

GRIDIRON FLASH—Eddie Quillan, Betty Furness. *RKO-Radio.* An extravagant tale of a youthful convict who was reformed by being put on a college football team. Pretty improbable, with no indication that colleges may be educational institutions, but many tried and true entertainment devices enter into it. *Family.*

HAPPINESS AHEAD—Dick Powell, Josephine Hutchinson. *First National.* A pleasant comedy romance about a rich girl who falls in love with a poor boy. Not a novel plot but plenty of good comedy is woven into it and Dick Powell sings several tuneful songs in his usual attractive manner. *Family.*

I'LL FIX IT—Jack Holt, Mona Barrie, Jimmy Butler. *Columbia.* In which a grafter goes too far, by trying to bribe a school-teacher to pass his kid brother, which starts a storm of investigation. Wholesale reform results, but there is not much realism to it and the ethical aspects are a bit odd. *Family.*

LADY BY CHOICE—Carole Lombard, May Robson, Walter Connolly, Roger Pryor. *Columbia.* A fan dancer adopts a mother as a publicity stunt, selecting an old woman who spends most of her time drinking, but their growing fondness for each other starts them on the road to reform. Plenty of dramatic moments and well sustained suspense. *Mature.*

LEMON DROP KID, THE—Lee Tracy, Helen Mack, Baby LeRoy. *Story by Damon Runyon. Paramount.* A race-racketeer, whom love in a village, and eventually a baby, turn into an honest workingman. Typical sentimental ap-

peal of the Damon Runyon kind of story. *Family.*

LOST IN THE STRATOSPHERE—William Cagney, Eddie Nugent, June Collyer. *Mono-gram.* Two U. S. Army aviators lead a happy-go-lucky life, cutting in on each other's dates, until they both fall in love with the same girl, at which point they are chosen to ascend into the stratosphere in a balloon. Good comedy and exciting drama. *Family.*

LOST LADY—Barbara Stanwyck, Frank Morgan. *Novel by Willa Cather. First National.* Story of a disillusioned girl who marries a man able to give her courage. The plot becomes a bit involved but the acting is good and the interest sustained. *Mature.*

***LOVE TIME**—Pat Patterson, Nils Asther, Henry B. Walthall. *Fox.* A charming musical romance, somewhat in the German style, built around Franz Schubert as a young man. The atmosphere is pleasing, the music especially delightful, and the cast admirable for such an idyllic picture. *Family.*

MADAME DU BARRY—Dolores Del Rio, Reginald Owen. *Warner.* An entertaining picture of Madame Du Barry, well acted but somewhat lacking in sincerity. The sophisticated parts are delicately handled and the life of the French Court in the reign of Louis XV is lavishly portrayed. *Mature.*

***MAN OF ARAN**—Gaumont-British. A simple, almost plotless story of Irish people on the Aran Isles, and their nearly primitive struggle for subsistence on their barren rock of an island. Extraordinarily beautiful, and deeply moving, with remarkable scenes of sea and storm. Acted by natives who create a rare picture of human courage. An exceptional picture (see page 8). *Suggested for school, library and church use; worth being kept permanently available. Family. Junior matinee.*

MAN WHO CHANGED HIS NAME, THE—Lyn Harding, Betty Stockfeld. *Novel by Edgar Wallace. DuWorld.* A wife whose devotion to her husband was put to a novel test. Good melodramatic atmosphere, helped immensely by Lyn Harding's splendid characterization. Made in England. *Family.*

***MARIE GALANTE**—Ketti Gallian, Spencer Tracy. *Novel by Jacques Deval. Fox.* An exciting story, so well told that the interest never lags, of a plot to destroy the U. S. fleet in the Panama Canal and the efforts of several nations to uncover it in time. A girl, charmingly played by the new French actress, is unwittingly involved. *Family.*

MENACE—Paul Cavanaugh, Gertrude Michael. *Paramount.* Tense melodrama, extracting all the thrills out of a situation where three people are in constant danger of being killed at the hands of a person whose identity is a mystery to the end. *Mature.*

MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH—*Pauline Lord, ZaSu Pitts, W. C. Fields. Novel by Alice Hegan Rice. Paramount.* A simple woman and her children, terribly poor, by always looking on the best side of things, and the kindness of charitable people, come through to a cheerful finish. W. C. Fields adds his humor to the general optimism. *Family. Junior matinee.*

ONE EXCITING ADVENTURE — *Binnie Barnes, Neil Hamilton, Paul Cavanaugh. Universal.* The very lovely Binnie Barnes in a pleasant comedy about a young woman who cannot resist stealing sparkling things, especially diamonds, and the two men who are interested in her strange malady for various reasons. Beautiful settings and smooth direction. *Mature.*

OUTCAST LADY—*Constance Bennett, Herbert Marshall. Novel "The Green Hat" by Michael Arlen. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A very good cast in a handsome screening of the story of reckless, gallant Iris March, and the sacrifices she made for her brother and her lover. Sophisticated (though tamed down from Arlen's story) and done with excellent taste and dramatic effectiveness. *Mature.*

PORT OF LOST DREAMS—*Bill Boyd, Lola Lane. Invincible.* An interesting story well photographed and acted. The captain of a fishing smack out of the Los Angeles harbor, and his mate befriend a girl who has stowed away on their boat. The interest is worked up to an ending which is unusual. The comic element is very good. *Mature.*

READY FOR LOVE—*Richard Arlen, Ida Lupino, Marjorie Rambeau. Novel by Tom Flanagan. Paramount.* Comedy of small town life, in which the sprightly daughter of an actress upsets the Puritan elders and meets romance in a young newspaper editor. *Family.*

RICHEST GIRL IN THE WORLD, THE—*Miriam Hopkins, Joel McCrea, Fay Wray. RKO-Radio.* A gay and amusing tale about a wealthy girl who changes places with her secretary in order to be sure that the man she loves wants her for herself alone—he responds in quite the wrong way. *Family.*

SCHOOL FOR GIRLS—*Sidney Fox, Lucille LaVerne, Paul Kelly. Novel "Our Undisciplined Daughters" by Richard W. Kauffmann. First Division.* A girl unjustly committed to a reform school of the old and unenlightened type, and a rich playboy who fell in love with her and brought about reforms in the school. Important for whatever light it sheds on social conditions that need improving. Glimpses of old-timers like Charles Ray and Anna Q. Nilsson. *Mature.*

SHE HAD TO CHOOSE—*Buster Crabbe, Isabel Jewell. Majestic.* Pleasing little romance about a boy who runs a deluxe roadside stand,

and a girl he employs as a waitress—nothing new in the plot but the acting of the principals make it enjoyable. Buster Crabbe shows marked improvement in his acting but his swimming exhibition is still made one of the big moments. *Family.*

SIX-DAY BIKE RIDER—*Joe E. Brown. First National.* Joe E. Brown does his familiar show-off business as a hick clown against a farcical but sometimes very exciting background of a six-day bicycle race. Funnier than Brown's recent pictures. *Family.*

STUDENT TOUR—*Jimmy Durante, Charles Butterworth, Maxine Doyle. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* A big show built around a college boat-crew's trip to England for an international race. Mostly new and pleasant personalities among the students, a fair amount of comedy, and good music culminating in a song of Nelson Eddy's. *Family.*

THAT'S GRATITUDE—*Frank Craven, Arthur Byron. Play by Frank Craven. Columbia.* A picturization of the successful stage comedy about a theatrical producer who moves in for an indefinite period on the family of the man whose life he is reputed to have saved, and becomes involved in their problems. Well acted, often very amusing and interesting throughout. *Family.*

TRANSATLANTIC MERRY-GO-ROUND — *Nancy Carroll, Gene Raymond, Jack Benny, Mitz Green. United Artists.* Music and melodrama on the high seas—a handsome production with a large cast of popular players, in which a plot about gamblers and confidence men and complicated loves holds the interest without seriously getting in the way of much gaiety, singing and dancing. *Mature.*

WAGON WHEELS—*Randolph Scott, Monte Blue, Gail Patrick. Novel "Fighting Caravans" by Zane Grey. Paramount.* A good Western of typical Zane Grey quality, depicting the overland journey in covered wagons of a group of Oregon settlers, who encounter many natural hardships and hostile Indians. *Family. Junior matinee.*

***WEDNESDAY'S CHILD** — *Frankie Thomas, Edward Arnold, Karen Morley. Play by Leopold Atlas. RKO-Radio.* A very splendid and moving characterization by Frankie Thomas of a sensitive boy's unhappiness over the divorce of his mother and father and his inability to adjust himself to the new situation. *Suggested for church use. Mature.*

***WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS**—*Helen Hayes, Brian Aherne. Play by Sir James M. Barrie. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Barrie's comedy of the little wife in the background who did more for her husband's career than he realized. Picturized surprisingly well, and delightfully acted. *Family.*

WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES—*Francis X. Bushman, Jr., Alice Dahl. Principal.* A melodrama of the Northern timberlands, in which a splendid dog takes a stirring part. *Family.*

WITHIN THE ROCK—*Lila Lee, Creighton Chancy. Novel by Marie Buxton Martin. Marks.* Although the production is rather crude and the acting is not of the first order, this story about a wealthy girl and the rough mountaineer she is forced to marry is so interestingly told that the picture becomes worthy of recommending as good entertainment. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

1 reel, unless marked otherwise.
All for family, juniors so marked.

INFORMATIONALS

ANYTHING FOR A THRILL! (World of Sports Series)—*Columbia.* Various sports.
CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox.* Singapore and Malay natives. *Junior.*
DAMASCUS (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Radio.*
DECKS AWASH (World of Sports Series)—*Columbia.* Sailboats.
EYES ON RUSSIA—*RKO-Radio.*
GOOD BADMINTON—*Vitaphone.*
HOLLAND TULIP TIME (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Junior.*
*IN FAR MANDALAY (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox. Junior.*
IN THE ARENA (Secrets of India Series)—*Gaumont-British.*
KEEPING TIME (Sportlight Series)—*Paramount.* Perfect timing in sports.
MARCH OF THE YEARS NO. 10—*Columbia.*
*MARCHING WITH SCIENCE (Adventures of a Cameraman Series)—*Fox. Junior.*
ON FOREIGN SERVICE (Adventures of a Cameraman Series)—*Fox.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 2—*Paramount. Junior.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 4—*Paramount.*
PATHE REVIEW NOS. 6-7—*RKO-Radio.*
PICTURESQUE PORTUGAL (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox. Junior.*
POLO THRILLS (World of Sports Series)—*Columbia.*
RED REPUBLIC—*RKO-Radio.* Life in Soviet Russia.
ROWING RHYTHM (World of Sports Series)—*Columbia.* College crews.
RUGBY—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Interesting and informative on great English game.
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 12-13—*Columbia.*
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 1 (Series 14)—*Columbia.*
SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 1—*Paramount.*
SONGS OF THE COLLEGES—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.*
STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 3—*Universal.*
STRIKES AND SPARES—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Expert bowling.
*SWITZERLAND THE BEAUTIFUL (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Junior.*
WATER RODEO (Sportlight Series)—*Paramount.*

CARTOONS

ALONG CAME A DUCK (Toddle Tale)—*RKO-Radio. Junior.*
AXE ME ANOTHER (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount. Junior.*
BETTY BOOP'S LITTLE PAL (Talkartoon)—*Paramount. Junior.*
BETTY BOOP'S PRIZE SHOW (Talkartoon)—*Paramount.*
BLACK SHEEP, THE (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Junior.*
BUDDY, THE WOODSMAN (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone. Junior.*
BUDDY'S CIRCUS (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone. Junior.*
CATNIPS OF 1940 (Krazy Kat)—*Columbia.*
DREAM WALKING, A (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount.*
GIRL AT THE IRONING BOARD, THE (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone.*
JOLLY LITTLE ELVES—*Universal.* Color cartoon. *Junior.*
JUNGLE JITTERS (Willie Whopper)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.*
LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME, A (Toddle Tale)—*RKO-Radio. Junior.*
MAGIC FISH, THE (Terrytoon)—*Educational.*
MICE IN COUNCIL (Terrytoon)—*Educational. Junior.*

MILLER'S DAUGHTER, THE (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone. Junior.*
OLD PIONEER, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Cartoon in color. *Junior.*
*ORPHANS BENEFIT (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists. Junior.*
PASTRY TOWN WEDDING, THE—*RKO-Radio.* Cartoon in color. *Junior.*
*PECULIAR PENGUINS (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists. Junior.*
SKYLARKS (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal. Junior.*
TALE OF THE VIENNA WOODS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Cartoon in color. *Junior.*
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT A SOLDIER (Talkartoon)—*Paramount.*
WHY DO I DREAM THOSE DREAMS (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone. Junior.*
YE HAPPY PILGRIMS (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal. Junior.*
VIVA WILLIE (Willie the Whopper)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS

ALL SEALED UP—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Trained seal.
*BABY BLUES—*Paramount.* Odd things that happened to a little girl in a garden. *Junior.*
BALLAD OF PADUCAH JAIL—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Irvin S. Cobb in pursuit of a convict.
BRIC-A-BRAC—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Edgar Kennedy.
DUMB-BELL LETTERS NOS. 1-4—*RKO-Radio.* Amusing letters received by companies from customers.
GOOD LUCK-BEST WISHES—*Educational, 2 rls.* The Pickens Sisters.
GOOFY MOVIES NOS. 8-9—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.*
GUS VAN AND HIS NEIGHBORS—*Universal, 2 rls.*
HOLLYWOOD HERE WE COME—*Columbia, 2 rls.* Arthur Jarrett.
*HIS LUCKY DAY—*Educational, 2 rls.* Ernest Truex.
HOLLYWOOD GAD-ABOUT, THE—*Educational.*
HOW TO BREAK 90 AT CROQUET—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Robert Benchley in a gentle burlesque on golf.
IF THIS ISN'T LOVE—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Walter Woolf singing.
LAW OF THE WILD, THE, NOS. 1-12 (serial)—*Mascot, 2 rls. each.* Rex, Rin-Tin-Tin, Jr. *Junior.*
LIFE'S LAST LAUGHS NO. 2—*Columbia.* Quaint epitaphs.
MADHOUSE MOVIES NO. 1—*Paramount.*
MIKE FRIGHT—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Our Gaag. *Junior.*
MIRRORS—*Vitaphone.* Freddy Rich's orchestra.
MR. AND MRS. JESSE CRAWFORD—*Vitaphone.*
MOUNTAIN MELODY—*Educational.* Good mountaineer singing. *Junior.*
MOVIE MEMORIES—*Vitaphone.*
NITE IN A NITE CLUB, A—*Universal, 2 rls.* Mature only.
NO CONTEST—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Ruth Etting.
NOSED OUT—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Irvin S. Cobb runs for mayor.
OLD KENTUCKY HOUNDS—*Paramount.* Dog burlesque. *Junior.*
OPENED BY MISTAKE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Patsy Kelly and Thelma Todd.
PAREE PAREE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Condensed version of "Fifty Million Frenchmen."
PHIL SPITALNY AND HIS MUSICAL QUEENS—*Vitaphone.*
POLICY GIRL, THE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Mitzi Mayfair.
PROFESSOR GIVES A LESSON, THE—*Columbia.* One of the Minute Mysteries.
RED RIDER, THE, NOS. 9-14 (serial)—*Universal, 2 rls. each.* Buck Jones. *Junior.*
RHYTHM ON THE ROOF—*Paramount.* Bing Crosby's brother, Bob, singing.
SERVICE WITH A SMILE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Leon Errol as owner of a filling station.
SHE'S MY LILLY—*Educational, 2 rls.* Will Mahoney.
SO YOU WON'T TALK—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Roscoe Ates.
SONG OF FAME, THE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Ruth Etting.
*SPECTACLE MAKER, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Lovely little fable in color. *Junior.*
SPICE OF LIFE NO. 2—*Columbia.* Literary Digest jokes.
SUPERSTITIONS OF THE BLACK CAT, THE—*Paramount.* A man explains the superstition to his wife.
SYNCPATED CITY—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Hal LeRoy.
TAILSPIN TOMMY NOS. 1-7 (serial)—*Universal, 2 rls. each.* Noah Beery, Jr. *Junior.*
THIS BAND AGE—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Ted Fio Rita and his orchestra.
VAUDEVILLE NO. 1—*Vitaphone.* Herb Williams.
YOUNG EAGLES NOS. 6-12 (serial)—*First Division, 2 rls. each.* Boy Scout adventures. *Junior.*

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

- National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
 - \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
 - \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups
- Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
 - \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine
- Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) . . . 25c
- Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) . free
- Special film lists each 10c
- Junior Matinee Films
- Foreign Films
- Educational Films
- Selected Book-Films
- Films on Subjects of Timely Interest
- Exceptional Photoplays
- Musical Films

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. IX, No. 9



December, 1934



From the Notable French Film "Madame Bovary" (see page 6)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BABBIT—Aline MacMahon, Guy Kibbee. From novel by Sinclair Lewis. First National. A small town man, in his efforts to be a big shot, gets into a jam but his family stand by him and save the day. Several dramatic moments but also much of the type of comedy which these two players do so well. *Family.*

BACHELOR OF ARTS—Tom Brown, Anita Louise. From novel by John Erskine. Fox. A freshman in college learning to be a man. Unlike most college movies it is not concerned with athletics. Not very profound, but a pleasant hero and some amusing minor characters. *Family.*

BRIDE OF THE LAKE, THE—Gina Malo, John Garrick. From novel "The Colleen Bawn" by Dion Boucicault. Ameranglo. A pleasant old-time melodrama, enriched by Irish scenery and fine Irish brogues. *Family.*

***BROADWAY BILL**—Myrna Loy, Warner Baxter, Walter Connolly. From a story by Mark Hellinger. Columbia. Broadway Bill is a horse, and the story is the struggle of his owner to get him into the Kentucky Derby. A picture full of likeable and amusing people, lively and sometimes intensely exciting, all handled with unusual human warmth and good nature. *Family.*

***CAPTAIN HATES THE SEA, THE**—John Gilbert, Victor McLaglen, Helen Vinson, Wynne Gibson. From novel by Wallace Smith. Columbia. What happened to several people from the West Coast to New York, changing some, not changing others. Always interesting and often immensely amusing, it makes excellent use of the talents of a cast which includes many well-known names. *Mature.*

***CHU CHIN CHOW**—Anna May Wong, Fritz Kortner, George Robey. From the operetta by Oscar Asche. Gaumont-British. Elaborate Arabian Nights entertainment, based on the successful English stage spectacle, which in turn was based on Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, with music. All right for children who like this sort of thing and are not sensitive to violence. *Family.*

COLLEGE RHYTHM—Jack Oakie, Joe Penner, Lanny Ross. Paramount. A rollicking, musical comedy drama about two college rivals, both on the football field and in the affairs of the heart. The music is tuneful and the cast excellent—together it is a highly amusing and entertaining picture. *Family. Junior matinee.*

ENTER MADAME—Elissa Landi, Cary Grant. From the play by Gilda Archibald and Dorothea Donn-Byrne. Paramount. An amusing story of the trials of a man married to a great opera star. The picture is well produced and acted, and the singing of Nina Koshetz of the Chicago Grand Opera Company and Richard Bonelli of the Metropolitan, from the operas "La Tosca," "Cavalliera Rusticana" and "Il Trovatore" is beautiful. *Mature.*

***EVELYN PRENTICE**—Myrna Loy, William Powell, Una Merkel. From novel by W. E. Woodward. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A pleasant comedy that develops into an engrossing murder mystery. An excellent job of production, in writing, direction and acting, with many likeable characters. *Mature.*

FATHER BROWN DETECTIVE—Walter Connolly, Paul Lukas, Gertrude Michael. From short stories by G. K. Chesterton. A well-produced and interesting story. Father Brown plays detective and does it so well that he wins out against Scotland Yard, and not only captures the famous criminal but helps him to become an honest man. The story is well handled with nothing Sunday-schoolish about it, and Father Brown proves he knows human nature. *Family.*

FIGHTING TROOPER, THE—Kermit Maynard, Barbara Worth. From novel "Footprints" by James Oliver Curwood. Ambassador. A fast moving story with not a dull moment, of the North West Mounties. A man wanted for murder and fur robbery is clever in throwing suspicions elsewhere, but the Mounties are more clever. Beautiful scenery. *Family. Junior matinee.*

FLIRTATION WALK—Dick Powell, Pat O'Brien, Ruby Keeler. First National. Romance and melody against a background of Hawaii and West Point making excellent use of the talents of Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler. *Family.*

GAMBLING—George M. Cohan, Wynne Gibson, Dorothy Burgess. From play by George M. (Continued on page 14)

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An Addition to Our General Committee



Mr. Sidney S. Lenz

MANY a nd varied interests are represented among the members of the National Board of Review and in some cases one person may combine numerous specialized interests in his field of activity. Such a one is the newest member

as an unknown he won recognition through his brilliant playing. Later he acted as president of this League, having become one of the outstanding players of the country. Other games in which he excels, although in an amateur way simply for the love of them, are ping pong, bowling, chess, backgammon and golf. His excellence in all of these is proven through the extensive collection of cups and medals which have been earned by him.

of the General Committee, Mr. Sidney S. Lenz whom we are pleased to introduce this month to our readers. Mr. Lenz is known perhaps best an outstanding bridge authority and author but he is also an authority on many other related subjects.

To begin at the beginning, and that is necessary with Mr. Lenz, for in very early boyhood he began to show an interest in many of the things in which he became an expert in later life, he was born in Chicago on July 12th, 1873. He is one of those fortunate people who has been able to make his hobby his life work, for after proving that he could be a success in the more prosaic business world, through building up a thriving manufacturing business, he left that and devoted himself to travel, to games and to sport. His early traveling in India was particularly in connection with his interest in the art of magic which, although he never used professionally, he has found an absorbing interest since the age of eight.

His prominence in the field of card games started in 1910 at the 20th American Whist League Congress in Chicago, where entered

In spite of all of this interest in the active field of recreation he has also had time for an interest in the stage and the motion picture. This latter interest began through his vice-presidency and editorship of the publication "Judge" where he was associated with the dramatic critic of that publication, George Jean Nathan. His affiliation with "Judge" lasted several years and while there he became acquainted with the theatre and with noted personalities of it.

Mr. Lenz has not only been interested in motion pictures but has appeared in a series of pictures on bridge with the late Wilbur C. Whitehead, also a bridge expert. He does not think the motion picture particularly well fitted for the serious teaching of bridge playing but he does think that the subject is interesting enough to enough people so that a series of short story presentations might well be made, perhaps teaching the subject but not particularly with that intent, rather with the idea of entertainment. Although the stage was his first love in the field of the drama Mr. Lenz believes that many discriminating people would now choose a good sound movie to a stage play.

For the unlimited possibilities of staging in the motion picture make it an especially effective dramatic medium and too, since so many of the fine actors of the stage have gone over to the motion picture the acting compares in most respects with that of the stage.

The addition of Mr. Lenz to the roster of the National Board of Review will be a valuable one not only because he brings a keen and perceptive viewpoint on motion pictures but also because of all his many other interests, for there is at this time a close relationship between the motion picture and various other forms of recreation and amusement in the study and planning being given to the subject of leisure time activities by many social service and recre-

ational groups and organizations. Elsewhere in this Magazine there is a review of a report of the National Recreation Association called "The Leisure Hours of 5,000 People." There you will note that among the 94 activities listed as participated in, the motion picture holds 3rd place but bridge playing comes also far to the forefront, holding 11th place in the long line-up.

Even before his membership on this Committee of the National Board we were fortunate in having Mr. Lenz's interest and his very helpful presence and advice in the Board's Annual bridge benefits and we look forward to this closer affiliation in which he will act both as a critic and a contributor to the Board's varied activities.

The Motion Picture as an Aid Toward Community Consciousness

By MRS. JOSEPH H. KOHAN

Borough President for Brooklyn, United Parents Associations of New York City

GETTING people to think is one of the major problems to anyone interested in social progress. In large cities, sight, sound and motion practically take the place of thought for the majority. Even ordinary comradely conversation is becoming classified as a "lost art." Yet, though we may be living in the machine age, I do not think that any one definitely confronted with the choice of being a perfect robot or a faulty human, would choose to be the robot. Millions are being faced by that problem without even recognizing it as such. High pressure advertising tells them what to eat, where to live, what to wear, how to behave, where to go, and how to amuse themselves. Technical efficiency in production and manufacture, necessitates the performance of a single operation, repeated day in, day out—year in, year out—so that a man becomes a mechanized and uninformed cog in the machine. Even recreation, which should be hyphenated as "re-creation," and regarded as an important dynamo for recharging the human battery for worthwhile endeavor, may soon more truly be pronounced as

"wreckreation" because it is being interpreted merely as "going places and doing things."

Salvation from becoming the robot lies in education. Not education that consists of an accumulation of facts for facts sake, so that a human may complacently regard himself as an animated encyclopedia but education that can be used to develop power to reason, select and control for his use, benefit, and re-creation, as an individual and as a member of society, all that man may produce or discover in the universe.

This thought leads us to one of the most important, potential factors for real education—the motion picture. Commerce may have harnessed it for profit but social need should direct and guide it. Pictures today, if they are to remain profitable, must provide romantic and exciting channels of escape from the actualities of living which oppress so many millions. But that romance and excitement can well be provided, not by the exploits of the desperado and the showgirl but by the Lindberghs, Beebes, Jane Adams, Lillian Walds of the world.

The average adult stands in a relation

to society similar to that of a child in a family. However, he has not the child's sense of security or of being provided for. Nevertheless, he does not think or feel called upon to participate in the direction of affairs. He, too, seeks to gratify his desire for participation and importance vicariously. Children do this through the fairy tale. Most adults would be shocked to discover, and ashamed to admit, that they were doing the same thing through the "movie." Therefore, it becomes pressingly necessary to develop a sense of importance in the individual and his responsibility to the community. Motion pictures can become effective and alluring aids.

Communities comprise people of varied levels of intelligence, tastes and aspirations. In large cities there are varied nationalities and races, speaking perhaps, other than the English language. In order to live together happily they should work together on many common problems—to instance: health, sanitation, child care, safety, crime prevention, food, housing, facilities for education and recreation, civic responsibility. The motion picture can be made the vehicle for presenting these problems in an exciting way, stimulating thought, bridging the difficulty of language and spanning the levels of intelligence.

Recently a leading department store in Brooklyn conducted an educational program, exhibiting the work of public and private progressive schools. This store believed that an informed and discriminating public would make more lucrative purchasers of children's toys. Part of the program consisted of short films visualizing child development, community conditions, recreation and safety. The audience consisted of the least as well as the most educated; but they were held by common interest in what the pictures had to say in a language intelligible to them all.

It might, therefore, well become the project of Better Films Councils to discover and make available all visual aids toward community awareness; to stimulate thought in the mass and help them transfer their apathy into constructive social activity through their organization in churches, clubs, and parent associations.

Book Reviews

Father Goose

THIS book, a sketchy life of Mack Sennett, belongs definitely on any shelf of Moviana. Those looking in it for precise factual data will find it often lacking in what they seek, but it is rich in the incredible lore of those fabulous days when Griffith, Ince and Sennett were helping create the movie world and the Keystone Comedies were bringing something unheard of to the delight of mankind. The figure of Sennett himself does not emerge as entirely flesh-and-blood—it is still a legend. But that is probably what it always ought to be.—J. S. H.

Published by Covici-Friede, Inc. Price, \$3.00.

Recreational Report

IF I only had the time to do what I want to do is the expression uttered with a sigh of longing frequently by very many people. According to authorities in the field of social and economic activity we now practically all have more leisure time and what to do with it?

An answer is given to this question in the report of a study made by the National Recreation Association entitled "Leisure Time Activities and Desires." The three major objectives of the study were to determine (1) what people are doing in their free time, either occasionally or often, (2) what changes have occurred in the use of their free time during the past year or so, and (3) what they would really enjoy doing if the opportunity were afforded. As a means of securing the information desired a questionnaire was prepared and distributed in which were listed 94 free time activities, 37 home and 57 outside activities. A total of 5,002 persons in 29 cities of different types and sizes submitted replies. The report is based largely on these replies and also upon interviews with individuals and agencies. Returns were secured through many types of organizations and from a wide range of occupations. More than 80% of the replies were from persons 21 years of age or older. 43% were employed

(Continued on page 13)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Madame Bovary

From Gustave Flaubert's novel; directed by Jean Renoir; photographed by Bachelep and Gibory; music by Darius Milhaud. Produced by La Nouvelle Société de Films; distributed by John S. Tapernaux.

The cast

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Charles Bovary | Pierre Renoir |
| Emma Bovary | Valentine Tessier |
| Homais | Max Dearly |
| Léon | Daniel Lecourtois |
| Rodolphe | Fernand Fabre |

CHANGING a novel into a motion picture—really changing it from the medium of words into the medium of the camera—is a thorough-going process that is not often attempted except in the case of insignificant stories that do not matter to anyone. It involves extracting the substance of a novel and then completely forgetting the form it had before, and shaping that substance all over again with no reference to anything but its motion picture values. Commercially, this is risky business: the wider public a novel has, and the better liked it is, the more howls go up when such a drastic procedure is followed. A film has to be “like the book” in all the respects that made the book popular, or it’s a disappointment to the large audience for whom it was made. So a screened novel is a special kind of motion picture, to be judged almost solely by its success in merely visualizing the novel’s characters and events, a sort of glorified picture-book in motion. *Little Women* was just such a film, unusually successful because it so thoroughly satisfied so many people who were fond of the book.

Madame Bovary is successful in the same way. The film as shown here suffers somewhat from attempts to bring it down to the

length considered acceptable to American audiences: French films are apt to seem over-long and draggy to people used to the brisk tempo of the American product. *Madame Bovary* was a better film before it was shortened, because the cuts make too abrupt breaks in the movement—they are like pages torn out of a book. But these breaks are few: they are mentioned only to explain the occasional feeling one has of looking at an old silent film from which a connecting sub-title is unaccountably missing.

Far more important is the fact that the film is Flaubert’s novel, given beautiful and vivid form for the eye to see. This visual form is completely French, in the original, by which I do not mean that the dialogue is French—though it is—but that the shapes of landscape and town and people you see on the screen are saturated with an untranslatable atmosphere, as if the air itself had a language not spoken anywhere else. The country roads, the woods, the dusk of evening, the small-town streets and market-places, the old city of Rouen, belong to no place in the world but Normandy, and the camera has caught them over and over again with an effect far more of painting than of photography. The indoor scenes, on the other hand, have a different quality, like the tones of a daguerrotype, and this peculiar manipulation of light and shade helps, almost as much as the objects on which it plays, to create the period of the story.

Flaubert’s Emma Bovary—that romantic provincial woman always dreaming of some lovelier, more glamorous life away from her humdrum home and humdrum husband—belongs, in all her circumstances, to the far-off days of a hundred years ago. To-

day there would be escapes for her—the movies, the radio, the innumerable modern forms in which the dissatisfied can snatch a bit of vicarious romance. For Emma, with her poor little selfish yearnings for finery and gaiety and a handsome lover, there were only lies and debt and adultery. She hadn't much in the way of brains; she was only an attractive woman, whom youth was leaving, full of petty but terribly real hungers, to whom her little round of life was not life at all, but a mere existence inexpressibly dull and sordid. She made her desperate little efforts to get away, and when the coil of her deceptions and her deceiving hopes got too tight the only thing, in a final desperation, was to die. She was as much the victim of her times, perhaps, as of her character.

Its truth was what made Flaubert's novel a classic, and the faithful way that truth has been put on the screen is what makes this film good. An American must bring to it some understanding of national differences—perhaps most important of all, to get the completest pleasure out of the film, he must appreciate the difference between French acting and what is called acting here. Our players—no matter how delightful—are for the most part merely themselves, moving about in parts that suit their personalities. The French actors act. To what they are they add a fine touch of theatricality (when it is not the real thing it is merely artificial) which heightens their performance into something more than what they merely are, and creates that thing more real than reality which is art. In *Madame Bovary* there is a whole cast of such actors—to single out Valentine Tessier and Pierre Renoir and Max Dearly is only to name three who stand out because their parts are so important.—J. S. H.

The First World War

Edited by Laurence Stallings; narrated by Pedro de Cordoba; produced by Truman Talley, in association with Simon and Schuster; distributed by Fox.

THIS film follows the same pattern as the photographic history that made a book of the same name. Instead of stills, it is of course movies, and instead

of brief ironic captions it has a running commentary, far more literate than such commentaries usually are, also ironical. Mr. Stallings—Hollywood's chief source of authority when it has a war film in the making—has his own feelings about war, and in such a production as this those feelings can find more definite expression than anything like *The Big Parade* allowed him. For all that, he hasn't entirely managed to keep all traces of glamour out of fighting. Probably irony isn't enough.

The picture is divided into sections: the preparations for the conflict (in which a feeble-looking old man named Bismark is glimpsed); the Balkan wars of 1912, with their seeds for the greater carnage to come; the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand; the war on the high seas—the Dardanelles, Jutland and the Adriatic—the war under the seas and the war in the air; the entrance of America; the collapse of Russia, with its attendant famine and revolution; the consolidation of the command under Foch in 1918; the Big Drive following the German push toward the channel ports and the allied counter-offensive; the armistice and the bristling question of the future.

All of this is made of news reels, some of them familiar, some of them not, all of them admirably edited and put together with striking effectiveness. Certainly no job of assembling this sort of thing has ever been nearly so well done before.

The fault to be found with it, if one is looking for the secret springs of war, is that it tells only the same old story. Royalty appears—the young children of King George playing with their toy weapons; the forgotten King of Montenegro and the equally forgotten Czar of Bulgaria; Ferdinand, whose death was used to start the conflagration; the man who became, and died, King of Yugoslavia; the Russian Romanoffs, praying for the health of their doomed heir; old Franz Josef doddering pathetically to his grave. Continually such figures are seen, going through their puppet motions, decorating soldiers between terrific glimpses of death among the fighting forces. But there is nowhere any hint of the hands that pulled these puppets' strings, the forces that created the war.

Only in the magnificent last section, where Mr. Stallings looks at the future, is there something that stirs with suspicion of what it may be all about. The post-armistice scene, with its present-day figures strutting and spouting, its soldiers drilling, its nations arming, is a skillful and imaginative piece of film reconstruction, with a crowded screen shouting warnings. To be sure the warnings are almost as cryptic as the riddling prophesies of a Delphic oracle, into which people must read their own meanings. But they seem, after the guarded and ironically unimpassioned utterances that accompany the war episodes, to speak to the eye with a shriller, more excited significance. And certainly they are technically as splendid an example of what can be put together out of bits of documentary film as one can hope to find in many a day.

The whole film is one that ought to be kept in continuous circulation. No better record of the externals of the war is likely ever to be made for the screen, and probably a long time will pass before the hidden, grimmer forces will be pictured.

J. S. H.

Lyric Leninism

OUT of Soviet Russia comes a film that has caused much talk, and if one believes the quotations, much admiration. Ambassador Bullitt has rarely been more moved by any work of art. H. G. Wells calls it one of the greatest and most beautiful films he has ever seen. The Norwegian Nexø and the French Malraux were moved to superlative words of emotional appreciation. Will Rogers, with his slightly different approach, says "the most elaborate and expensive picture that was ever made in Russia. The picture is tremendous propaganda."

This film is Dziga Vertov's *Three Songs About Lenin*. The first song is called "Under a Black Veil My Face," which is the visible symbol for "in a black prison my soul," and it sings of the dawn of Lenin's truth in the East, and the freeing of Oriental women from ignorance and superstition. The second song, "We Loved Him," is a dirge for Lenin, a cinematic at-

tempt to do what Walt Whitman did in memory of Lincoln in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed." The third song, "In the Great City of Stone," is a paean of victory, celebrating the triumphant survival of Lenin in the vast constructive works going on in the Soviet Republics.

As propaganda—to look at the film from the Will Rogers angle—all this is little likely to convert many who aren't already of the faith. Its chief interest for the ordinary student of the motion picture—and it should be vastly interesting to him as an experiment—is in its use of the documentary film (news reel in plain language) for emotional purposes. How far the experiment seems successful depends on what the individual responds to. Those who demand pictorial beauty won't care for the mingling of modern photography with old (however precious historically) news clips. Those who demand poetry in their songs (remembering how Whitman could saturate his democratic vision of America with poetry) will look in bewilderment for lyric ecstasy in the words that go along with the picture like verses with music—such words as "My Farm . . ." "My collective farm . . ." "My Earth . . ." "Our subway . . ." That sort of poetry is all too reminiscent, to one spectator, of the words school children used to learn, to the tune of "Rose Marie," to teach them care in crossing city streets: "Oh Safety Rules, I love you, I'm always thinking of you!" Others, who expect individuality from the Russians, will wonder why something more characteristic couldn't have been used as musical accompaniment for the funeral threnody than the worn out (and certainly bourgeois) Chopin march and the Trauermarsch from "Gotterdammerung."

When such extravagant praise greets a film as some people have given to *Three Songs About Lenin*, one ought in all critical honesty to try to find out just what makes it so good, and if one cannot think it good to say why it is not. To me it seems just a bright idea, worked up probably to order for the Seventeenth Anniversary of the October Revolution. It seems nothing more than that because it is thin and superficial, without roots in any deep culture or in any

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The Films Entertain and Educate

TWO junior motion picture activities held the interest of the National Board of Review members on Saturday morning, November 24th. One was a lecture and film program given at Carnegie Hall in New York City by Dr. Raymond L. Ditmars, member of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review. Dr. Ditmars is Curator of Mammals and Reptiles at the New York Zoological Park and as such is host to thousands of youngsters, and interested adults too, throughout the year where the various animals he has assembled are viewed. But Dr. Ditmars has great respect for the seeing eye of the camera and he has recorded a series of 42 reels entitled *Living Natural History** portraying graphically on the screen many of the fascinating objects and subjects in which he is interested.

Five of these reels including *Anthropoid Apes*, *Horns and Antlers*, *Beavers*, *Poisonous Serpents* and *The World of Make Believe* were shown at the Carnegie Hall showing before a group of youngsters and some equally enthusiastic adults, playing chaperone but getting as much fun out of it as out of the usual annual circus chaperonage. These films are exceedingly interesting for themselves and when accompanied by Dr. Ditmars' fascinating talk it is not surprising that the youthful audience exhibited such a delighted response. We tried to talk with Dr. Ditmars after his lecture but with little success for so many young people were surrounding him wanting to shake hands or ask questions, and if we ever believed children were not interested in snakes we changed our minds when we found young curly-headed girls asking Dr. Ditmars, "How often can you extract the venom," etc.

Dr. Ditmars considers the motion picture an exceedingly important vehicle for entertainment and instruction, and believes it accomplishes both for it often, he says, keeps an audience of as many as 2000 youngsters perfectly quiet during a showing but causes them to let fly a volley of intelligent questions following the film.

The second part of the Carnegie Hall program was a lecture by Dr. Harry C. Raven, Associate Curator of Comparative

Anatomy, American Museum of Natural History, on "Meshie" an unusually trained chimpanzee, a playmate of his children. To the delight of the audience "Meshie" appeared not only in films but on the stage doing all sorts of interesting things.

The second activity was a meeting of sixty members of the Young Reviewers Club of the National Board to review a short subject program at the Trans-Lux Theatre in Brooklyn, which consisted of a film on yachting, *Decks Awash*, a Mickey Mouse cartoon, *The Mail Pilot*, a Silly Symphony, *Peculiar Penguins*, an old Chaplin, *The Adventurer* and a composite newsreel.

The ballots filled out by the young school people showed a definite interest in a short subject program. Silly Symphonies were the favorite of the girls, with Betty Boop and Mickey Mouse following closely. Pop-eye did not rate one vote from the girls, although he ran far ahead of the other characters of the cartoon world in the estimation of the boys. Others listed by the boys were Mickey Mouse, Silly Symphonies, Krazy Kat and the Lucky Rabbit and one vote for Betty Boop. One boy of 15 did not like cartoons at all maintaining, "They are only for very small children."

Of the whole program the newsreel was the favorite—some comments being: 14 year old boy, "I think newsreels very entertaining and they help in my knowledge of different countries"; girl of 14, "Newsreels always manage to keep a person up-to-date in news and they help me in my current history class"; 14 year old boy, "Everybody would like to be at the scene of an important happening and the newsreels do just that"; boy of 13, "The program seems practically perfect to me, perhaps some tiresome speeches by prominent men could be omitted" (there were three other comments regarding this particular element of content—one 11 year old boy saying merely, "Take out speeches!"); although a 12 year old girl liked "speeches about our government because it helps me in school." A girl of 14 had an idea on improving the newsreel, she thought, "They would be more interesting if they were divided up, for instance, news of the week, day by day, flashing to different countries or sections showing what

* These films are available in 16/mm from Bell and Howell, film distributors, 11 West 42nd Street, N. Y. C.

happened all over the world on the same day. Also the so-called humorous interjections could be omitted with much resulting benefit"; and from a boy of 11, "I liked this newsreel because it was the longest I ever saw."

The group was practically unanimous in the opinion that newsreels helped them in their history, civics, geography, current events and public speaking classes. As one boy said, "The mere reading of the item gives me an idea of the news but the newsreel paints a vivid picture." A girl of 12 particularly liked them because they gave her a "clearer idea of the characteristics of people." A boy and girl listed specific instances of help to them in school in news items regarding "Boulder and Norris Dams." Suggestions for improvement came from a 13 year old girl who would like to see "more city news" and a boy of 14 who would like a "monthly or weekly report on sports of all kinds."

Charlie Chaplin interested 13 boys more than any other part of the program but only 2 girls were entertained by his antics.

A boy of 13 thought an ideal program for a theatre showing short subjects only would be one with 50 minutes of newsreels of the day and 2 cartoons, preferably in color. The majority of the boys and girls were of the opinion that a program for such a theatre would be helped by a comedy of the Charlie Chase, Three Stooges or Our Gang type—something with "characters and humor and talking."

In the last analysis though they thought the newsreel was far the most important feature of the program and as long as the remainder was entertaining and worth "sitting through" that was about all that mattered.

Photoplay Appreciation in High Schools

IT is a futile waste of words and time to talk of better films without giving some attention to better audiences. And better audiences will come as young people grow more discriminating in their tastes and they will grow more so as they learn to properly appreciate and evaluate motion

pictures. And this they will learn as opportunity is given them through directed groups. Fortunately interest is being given in increasing measure to such activity in the wider organization of school courses in motion picture study and the publication of material designed to aid this study.

A recent publication entitled *Photoplay Appreciation in American High Schools* offers an assistance to school and lay groups. It is written by William Lewin and appears as a publication of the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Lewin is Chairman of the Committee on Photoplay Appreciation of this Council and he has compiled and written several pamphlets and articles on school motion picture study methods based upon his experiences as a teacher and a research student in the subject.

The present volume of 120 pages carries a foreword by Prof. Walter Barnes of the School of Education of New York University, who during his service as President of the National Council of Teachers of English, gave special attention to the introduction of cinema study in the school. In this foreword he says "The experiment (set forth in this monograph) proves conclusively that photoplay appreciation can be taught to high school pupils, that attitudes and tastes can be improved; and it indicates what are some of the basic conditions and the promising methods for refining appreciation. The schools and, particularly, the English departments can evidently do something about it: they can help children to be more thoughtful and fastidious in regard to photoplays, to understand and enjoy better photoplay excellence, to make more intelligent demands upon the producers; in a word, to ascend to higher levels of comprehension and discrimination."

The first chapter asks the question "What is the cinema problem?" and succeeding chapters answer this in a way helpful not only to teachers but to the many Better Films Councils and other groups outside of the schools interested in motion picture study. Better Films Councils have always sought for school contact and school interest in their work and when it comes to studying the motion picture itself in the

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BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

WRITING under the topic "Leisure Time Activities for Children,"

Mrs. John Vruwink has much of value to say from long experience. She is the very able and interested chairman of the motion picture activity of the American Association of University Women, which is conducted under the Los Angeles Branch. We quote that on the subject of junior matinees from her article appearing in a recent issue of Motion Picture Reviews, published by the Women's University Club of the Los Angeles Branch.

I have been interested in this problem of children and the movies for over ten years, and I know that the move for children's matinees in Southern California follows more or less the same pattern as that in other communities. In the days of silent films we gradually won over thirty-five theatre managers to a plan of supervised weekly junior matinees at which no films were shown which had not been approved as suitable and of special interest to children between the ages of six and fourteen years. It was not then impossible to find material for these performances, but when sound entered the field the entire picture changed. Not only is the subject matter different, with greater realism increasing the sophistication and emotional strain, but the lack of action in many films also detracts from the interest for children, while increased noise and mature dialogue exhaust the younger audiences. In Southern California one by one the matinees failed to hold their audiences or their supporters. Children are still flocking to the movies, but they are not from the class of homes from which they used to come, and in most communities the pictures they see are generally without supervision. The women who have been interested in this problem for so many years are now limited to doing all they can to educate the public to selective attendance and are frankly admitting defeat in persuading exhibitors to give family programs

or to make any regular provision for approved children's matinees.

I now believe that each community should arrange balanced programs for younger children which would bring together all groups interested in child recreation; that the plan should include drama on the stage, music by the best available orchestras, story hours through public library groups, selected motion picture programs, and outdoor activities planned by playground associations, or the different girl and boy groups available in any community. It is a stimulating idea which is certainly not impossible of accomplishment and which ought to invite enthusiastic support from those interested in the broader outlook which it offers children.

As long as the motion picture producers feel that there is no money in children's pictures, we shall probably not have them. But I believe it possible to offer an occasional program from the material on hand. In Los Angeles last winter, a group sponsored the Children's Cinema. The programs were planned for children of six to ten years; were one hour in length, and were made up of the Walt Disney Silly Symphonies, Mickey Mouse films, selected comedies, microscopic films, Ditmars animal films, travelogues, etc. For older children Douglas Fairbanks' silent film of *Robin Hood* was revived.

We learned a lot in selecting our programs. The Disney products were "sure fire," but we did not want the entire program of this type—however suitable. And we found a dearth of material or reliable information on other short subjects. We had to hold the attention of children—the most critical audience in the world. We could not use the didactic film. The pictures had to be dramatic first, interesting always, full of action and fun. We went through files reporting hundreds of subjects to select a varied assortment of animal films, sports, adventure, travel, comedy and

fantasy which met the high standards we had set. There is not enough material available for anyone to select weekly programs of the highest type for children under ten. Such frequency is not necessary or wise, but we know from actual experience that the pictures are not to be found at theatrical distributing centers in sufficient quantity to make it possible, even if desirable. The pictures were rented at the current rates, and the shows just paid expenses because the admittance was rather higher than we wished it to be. But certainly any community could underwrite such an occasional matinee and there are some pictures such as *Smoky*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Treasure Island*, *Little Women* which can be obtained and which will appeal to children under twelve as well as to older ones.

At once practical-minded persons will bring up the very real possibility that distributors will not even rent these films to non-theatrical exhibitors. But usually exchanges are fair-minded, and as long as the shows are not making money the exhibitors will not object. When they do, or even before they do, there is always a socially-minded theatre manager who is willing to take over the project and cooperate with the community leaders to give what the public will support. But such a plan must be underwritten. A plan of this sort needs financial support always. The matinees will not pay for themselves at 10c an admission, and no theatre manager should in fairness to himself be asked to pay for a project of this sort. Personally I prefer to have the shows in a theatre. The children like it and it brings the exhibitor and his patrons into pleasant worthwhile cooperation and mutual understanding of each others problems.

HIGH SCHOOLS throughout the country are using and studying the motion picture as entertainment and education to a greater degree each year. This work is organized into clubs and courses functioning in different ways. The plan of one group may hold suggestion for another and for all new groups forming, so we quote the following

from a report from the Motion Picture Council of the Woodrow Wilson High School of Portsmouth, Virginia, sent by Mr. L. C. Padden, Faculty Advisor.

"Our Motion Picture Council is the organization within our school that selects and exhibits all the motion picture programs used for entertainment and educational purposes in the school. As part of our recreational program in this school we use selected pictures at regular intervals. The plan is financed by an activities plan in which children pay ten cents weekly and are admitted to school activities. We used fifteen feature length programs during this school year.

In addition we have pictures on educational subjects both free industrial and rental. Some are 16mm pictures and are used in the classrooms in the usual visual setup. Others are used in an auditorium for larger groups. We presented 25 hours of such pictures this past school year.

We have conducted a little survey by means of a questionnaire." Portions of the questionnaire are here reproduced:

Name or mark your first and second choice in the following list of moving pictures:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>College Humor</i> | <i>The Sign of the Cross</i> |
| <i>Mayor of Hell</i> | <i>Peg O'My Heart</i> |
| <i>Elmer the Great</i> | <i>The Big Broadcast</i> |
| <i>Zoo in Budapest</i> | |

State your first and second choice of the following types of pictures:

Mystery stories
 Historical themes
 Musical shows such as *Big Broadcast*
 Love stories
 Religious themes

Who is your favorite actor?

What quality makes him or her your first choice?

Name the best movie you ever saw.

Why is it your first choice of pictures?

What form of recreation is your favorite?

Do moving pictures teach desired qualities in young people or do young people learn more bad than good from them?

The results were as follows: Choice of pictures and number who selected them as first and second choices:

1. *Mayor of Hell*, 39; 2. *College Humor*, 38; 3. *The Sign of the Cross*, 32; 4. *Big Broadcast*, 30; 5. *Elmer the Great*, 30; 6.

Zoo in Budapest, 17; 7. *Peg O'My Heart*, 12.

Choice of types of pictures:

1. Mystery stories, 57; 2. Musical shows, 52; 3. Historical themes, 32; 4. Love stories, 19; 5. Religious themes, 14.

First four in choice of actors—41 selections:

James Cagney, 15; Janet Gaynor, 8; Bing Crosby, 8; Clark Gable, 3.

There were 12 reasons given for first choice of actors. Thirty-one different pictures chosen for first choice. Twenty-one forms of favorite recreation—first five forms as follows: swimming, 25; sport in general, 17; moving pictures, 16; football, 15; reading, 9.

Do moving pictures do more harm than good to young folks:

Do more good, 38; do more harm, 14; undecided, 38; no answer, 12.

"This questionnaire was given to 100 children who had seen the pictures mentioned. They were not required to answer any or all questions. No names were placed on any papers or any mark of identification. They were urged to answer frankly but not to answer any that they did not feel at liberty to do without reservation.

"It is our purpose in this program to help the children develop a taste for the more worth while phases of pictures; to train the children how to appreciate the modern drama in pictures just as they have been trained for appreciation of stage productions, and to help them to select better pictures for their entertainment. We hope to include in our program a project with the Dramatic Club of the school, in which we plan to dramatize certain incidents in the history of motion pictures.

We are pleased and encouraged to have Mr. Padden write "I assure you that we use the weekly film estimates of the National Board of Review with much care in our selection of feature programs and we find them the most reliable and helpful source of accurate information."

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full time, 28% part time, and the others either occasionally or not at all.

The sum of the activities taken part in by the 5,002 individuals during the year to-

talled 126,442 or an average of 25 activities per individual. Of these 12 were home and 13 were outside activities. The ten activities reported by the largest number of individuals listed in rank order are reading newspapers and magazines, listening to the radio, attending the movies, visiting or entertaining others, reading books—fiction, auto riding for pleasure, swimming, writing letters, reading books—non-fiction, conversation.

The report makes the statement that the recent increase in leisure time presents a special challenge to agencies, both public and private, which have as their primary concern the providing of more abundant opportunities for people to use during their free hours. With the motion picture taking third place in the 94 activities studied in this quite comprehensive survey an added importance is given to the work of Better Films Councils, those city-wide organizations made up of a representation from various social, recreational, educational and civic groups in the community which brings the different organization interests in a co-operative and unified way to work for the best use of the motion picture in many ways and the support of the best pictures in the theatres.

The motion picture leads in the activities taken part in outside of the home, and this in spite of the fact, as this report shows in some of its detailed paragraphs, that there has been a decreased participation in those forms of entertainment necessitating a cost. But it seems even the more meagerly lined purse still provides the fee for a movie attendance.

Two points of especial consideration to those interested in motion pictures may be drawn from this report. First that the motion picture must be recognized as an outstanding recreational activity and thus receive the community attention due it and that this attention must be directed, continuing and constructive not sporadic or negative. And second that a reliable, disinterested motion picture guide in some form should be available to all communities so that this preferred amusement be chosen so that it offers value received in good en-

tertainment for time and money spent at the theatre.

Published by National Recreation Association, 315 4th Ave., N. Y. C. \$1.00.

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really felt emotion. Songs and poems may be written about men, as this was, nominally, for the man Lenin—but it is really about Leninism, which is a vastly different thing for lyric purposes. One's collective farm has to have something besides economic values before it is really home sweet home, and political concepts are still a long way from being song material in any sense in which we are accustomed to think of song.

The great Russian lyric film is still Eisenstein's *Romance Sentimentale*. But that was not propaganda.—J. S. H.

Selected Pictures Guide

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Cohan. Fox. A mystery story, done in the key of comedy and sentiment yet skillfully building up a good dramatic tension. Mr. Cohan finally has a picture that shows him at his best, as a father seeking to find out how his daughter died. *Mature.*

GENTLEMEN ARE BORN—Franchot Tone, Jean Muir. First National. A timely story of four boys who graduate from college during the depression, and their struggles for a living against the economic conditions. Well acted and highly interesting. *Family.*

I AM A THIEF—Mary Astor, Ricardo Cortez. Warner. An entertaining story of jewel robbers and how they are cleverly entrapped by the French secret service in league with the insurance companies. *Mature.*

IMITATION OF LIFE—Claudette Colbert, Warren William. From novel by Fannie Hurst. Universal. An interesting story of a white woman and a colored woman who are drawn together through poverty. The story carries them through to financial success but each must sacrifice for her daughter. The colored question is treated with poignancy and discretion. Louise Beaver as the negro woman runs away with the honors although the entire cast is excellent. *Family.*

JEALOUSY—Nancy Carroll, George Murphy. From story "Spring 3100" by Argyl Campbell. Columbia. A young quick-tempered prize-fighter, whose jealousy almost leads to tragedy. A neat surprise makes an unexpected ending. *Mature.*

**KID MILLIONS—Eddie Cantor, Ann Sothorn, Ethel Merman. United Artists.* On a plot concerning a fabulous inheritance, which takes everybody to Egypt, a jolly show has been built, tuneful, lively and amusing. *Family.*

LAWLESS FRONTIER, THE—John Wayne. Monogram. The pursuit and capture of the bandit, Pandro Zanti. Fast moving, with some surprise escapes. *Family. Junior matinee.*

**LITTLE FRIEND—Nova Pilbeam, Matteson Lang, Lydia Sherman. From the novel by Ernst Lothar. Gaumont-British.* The story of a little girl and the effects of her parents' threatened divorce upon her. So well acted that it is especially poignant, with much of the quality of *The Constant Nymph*. *Mature.*

MEN OF THE NIGHT—Bruce Cabot, Judith Allen. Columbia. A very likely story of jewel thieves who are cleverly trapped by a young policeman and a hot dog stand waitress. *Family.*

MERRY WIDOW, THE—Maurice Chevalier, Jeannette MacDonald. From the operetta by Lehar, Leon and Stern. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The delightful old operetta a la Lubitsch, meaning considerable change and brightening of plot, many sophisticated bits and less emphasis on the music. The rest of the cast superior to the stars in providing amusement. *Mature.*

MURDER IN THE CLOUDS—Ann Dvorak, Lyle Talbot. First National. Adventure among air-transport pilots, centering around a stolen formula for explosives. Quick action—interesting melodrama. *Family.*

MUSIC IN THE AIR—Gloria Swanson, John Boles, Douglass Montgomery. From the operetta by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. Fox. Picturesque musical romance laid in Bavaria, about two young people from the country who go to Munich and become involved with an operetta and its prima donna. Done in the lavish style of German musicals. *Family.*

**PAINTED VEIL, THE—Greta Garbo, Herbert Marshall, George Brent. From the novel by W. Somerset Maugham. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* What a neglected wife learned about love in China during a cholera epidemic. Lighter moments than usual for Garbo—the drama enriched by excellent settings and excellent acting, develops into a moving climax. *Mature.*

**POWER—Conrad Veidt, Benita Hume, Cedric Hardwicke. From novel by Eion Feuchtwanger. Gaumont-British.* Eighteenth century historical novel, showing the rise to power of the Jew Suss in Wurtenburg and the price he paid for his ambition to free his race from persecution. Pageant-like in beauty, made impressive by effective acting and direction—equal to the recent excellent English historical productions. *Suggested for schools and libraries. Mature.*

PRESCOTT KID, THE—Tim McCoy. Columbia. Familiar faces in familiar scenes—a tale of stage-coach days, and the intrepid stranger who comes along to clean up the town of bad men. Well done and interesting. *Family.*

ST. LOUIS KID, THE—James Cagney, Patricia Ellis, Allen Jenkins. From story "A Perfect Week-end" by Frederick H. Brennan. Warner. Two city truck-drivers who get mixed up in a farmers' milk-strike. Cheerful and lively, it

combines comedy and melodrama deftly, with an amusing thread of hard-boiled romance running through it. Cagney in a gay and sympathetic part. *Mature.*

SANGEN TILL HENNE (Song to Her)—*Marvin Ohman. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.* A middle-aged operatic tenor who temporarily gets in the way of a young couple's romance. Charming done, with a lot of good music. Entirely in Swedish. *Family.*

STRANGE WIVES—*Roger Pryor, June Clayworth.* From the novel "Bread upon the Waters" by Edith Wharton. *Universal.* An amusing comedy about a man who marries an Ukrainian and has to take her entire family. How he gets rid of them and makes them pay, is an unique idea, and highly entertaining. *Mature.*

WE LIVE AGAIN—*Anna Sten, Fredric March.* From the novel "Resurrection" by Leo Tolstoi. *United Artists.* Tolstoi's novel of the Russian prince who atoned for the wrong he had done a peasant girl, done with a handsome polish that does not probe disturbingly beneath the surface of the life it depicts. A better part than *Nana* for Anna Sten. *Mature.*

***WHITE PARADE, THE**—*Loretta Young, John Boles. Fox.* Following girls through a nurses' training school, with great human interest, many appealing incidents and altogether a definite quality of bringing out the finer traits in people without being too preachy about it. Several excellent actresses help. *Suggested for schools and libraries. Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless otherwise marked)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

BOSTON TEA PARTY (See America First Series)—*Vitaphone.* These three subjects (see below *Pilgrim Days and Hoil* *Columbia*) the first of a new series by E. W. Newman, show sites of American historical events, houses, memorials, statues, etc., from the earliest settlements to the administration of President Monroe. Worth being kept permanently available; suggested for schools and libraries. *Junior.*

EH DAG OMBORD (Prince Wilhelm and a Day on Board)—*Scandinavian, 2 rls.* An informative film with the Swedish prince talking about Swedish shipping.

FAKERS OF THE EAST—*RKO-Radio.* Indian street magicians. *Junior.*

***FLYING PIGSKINS**—*Columbia.* Football as played by different nations. *Junior.*

GOING PLACES NOS. 4-5—*Universal.* Lowell Thomas takes us to different parts of the globe.

HAIL COLUMBIA—*Vitaphone.* See *Boston Tea Party.* *Junior.*

IRELAND EMERALD ISLE (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Travelogue in color. *Junior.*

ISLE OF SPICE, THE—*RKO-Radio.* Ceylon.

MEDBURY AMONG COCOONS (Laughing with Medbury)—*Columbia.* Making of silk in Kashmir.

NERVE OF SOME WOMEN, THE—*Paramount.* Daredevil stunts by women.

OVER AN EFTER BADVATTEN (Over the River Searching for a Bathing Place)—*Scandinavian.* Swedish sea resort.

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 5—*Paramount.*

PATHE TOPICS NO. 1—*RKO-Radio.*

PILGRIM DAYS—*Vitaphone.* See *Boston Tea Party.* *Junior.*

***SADDLE CHAMPS** (Sportlight Series)—*Paramount.* Different types of saddles for different sports.

STRANGER THAN FICTION NOS. 4-5—*Universal.*

SVENSKA BILDER NOS. 9-10 (Swedish Pictures)—*Scandinavian.* Swedish newsreels.

VAGEN UTFER FRAN OSTERHAVET TILL VASTERHAVET (The Way from the East Sea to the West Sea)—*Scandinavian, 2 rls.* Through the Gota Canal from east to west coast of Sweden.

CARTOONS

BOSKO'S PARLOR FRANKS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* In color.

DANCE CONTEST, THE (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount, Junior.*

***GODDESS OF SPRING, THE** (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists.* Delightfully Disneyized version of the legend of Proserpine in color. *Junior.*

HOLIDAY LAND (Scrappy)—*Columbia, Junior.*

KEEP IN STYLE (Betty Boop)—*Paramount, Junior.*

KRAZY'S WATERLOO (Krazy Kat)—*Columbia.*

LITTLE DUTCH MILL, THE—*Paramount.* Nice little color cartoon with good music. *Junior.*

MICKEY PLAYS PAPA (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists, Junior.*

THOSE BEAUTIFUL DAMES—*Vitaphone.* Color cartoon with toys coming to life. *Junior.*

TOM TOM THE PIPER'S SON (Terrytoon)—*Educational.* Introducing various Mother Goose characters. *Junior.*

***TOYLAND BROADCAST**—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Charming holiday fantasy in color. *Junior.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS
ADVENTURER, THE—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Re-issue of old Chaplin comedy with sound.

BEHIND THE SCREEN—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Re-issue of old Chaplin comedy with sound.

BOOSTING DAD—*Educational, 2 rls.* One of the Frolics of Youth series in which Sonny and Mary Lou help to get their Dad elected to the school committee.

BOUNDING MAIN, THE—*Educational.* Chanties aboard a sailing ship.

CAMPUS HOOVERS, THE—*Educational, 2 rls.* Another of the high school comedies—youth and pleasant.

COUNSEL ON DE FENCE—*Columbia, 2 rls.* Harry Langdon.

DONE IN OIL—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly.

FLAME SONG, THE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Condensed version of the operetta "The Song of the Flame."

HOLLYWOOD MOVIE PARADE—*Educational.* Jackie Cooper pursued by a little girl who wants to be a Shirley Temple.

IMMIGRANT, THE—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Re-issue of old Chaplin comedy with sound.

KNICKERBOCKER KNIGHTS—*Universal, 2 rls.* Good vaudeville.

LADIES AT PLAY—*Paramount.* Woman orchestra.

MONKEY SHINES—*Paramount.* Adventures of a runaway chimp. *Junior.*

MYSTERY MOUNTAIN (Serial) NOS. 1-5—*Mascot, 2 rls. each.* Ken Maynard and his horse "Tarzan" in much exciting action. *Junior.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 2—*Columbia.*

SHOW KIDS—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* A boy puts on a show which fills his father's theatre after had business had closed it. *Junior.*

SOMETHING SIMPLE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Charley Chase.

SONGS THAT LIVE—*Vitaphone.* Gus Edwards singing his compositions such as "School Days," etc.

TAILSPIN TOMMY (Serial) NOS. 8-12—*Universal, 2 rls. each.* *Junior.*

TWO LAME DUCKS—*Educational, 2 rls.* Funny duck-hunting.

WASHEE IRONEE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Our Gang brings excitement into the life of a lonesome rich boy.

WAY DOWN YONDER—*Educational.* Colored singers.

YOU SAID A HATFUL—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Charley Chase.

YOUR STARS FOR 1935—*Educational, 2 rls.* An astrologer makes some general prophecies for next year.

(Continued from page 10)

schools there is even a greater source of interest combining as this does the motion picture both as entertainment and education.

From many councils there has been a demand for suggested textbooks for use by teachers or leaders in Council junior review activity and this volume provides one fulfillment of that demand prepared as it is for study purposes.

Published by Appleton-Century Co., Price, \$1.00.

Much of junior activity is given in this issue and we suggest in this connection that you write for the new list, Selected Films for Children's Showings, 10c in stamps from the National Board of Review.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

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New movies, the

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. X, No. 1



January, 1935

Dr. Myron T. Scudder

Robert Flaherty Tells
How He Made
"Man of Aran"

Best Films of the Year

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BAND PLAYS ON, THE—Robert Young, Betty Furness. From story "Backfield" by Byron Morgan and J. Robert Brens. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Four youngsters, saved from the reformatory by a football coach, and developed into football stars and ambitious young men by his influence. Interesting story and a good cast. *Family.*

BEHOLD MY WIFE—Sylvia Sidney, Gene Raymond. From novel "Translation of a Savage" by Sir Gilbert Parker. Paramount. To get revenge on his wealthy family for breaking up his romance a pampered son marries an Indian girl and many complications follow when he brings her to his home. *Mature.*

BIOGRAPHY OF A BACHELOR GIRL—Ann Harding, Robert Montgomery. From play by S. N. Behrman. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The complications arising from an editor's proposal to a woman with an unconventional career to write her life and loves. Comedy often brilliant, cast good. Ann Harding's performance of a witty Bohemian a matter of taste. *Mature.*

BORDERTOWN—Paul Muni, Bette Davis, Margaret Lindsay. From novel by Carroll Graham. Warner. A Mexican-American lawyer, young and ambitious, up against local prejudices, goes to a border town to make a fortune, and in the long run hardship and tragedy change his ideals from mere money-making. Powerfully acted, and much solid though not heavy substance in it. *Mature.*

BRIGHT EYES—Shirley Temple, James Dunn. Fox. A story contrived to give Shirley Temple the most effective part she has had, as the little pal of the flyers at a big airport. The picture is a fine Christmas cake for children and their adorers. *Family. Junior matinee.*

COUNTY CHAIRMAN, THE—Will Rogers, Louise Dresser, Evelyn Venable. From play by George Ade. Fox. Politics interfering with love in an inland town of thirty years ago. A typical Will Rogers picture, homespun in quality and entertaining, with Stepin Fetchit helping the star to create amusement. *Family.*

GRAND OLD GIRL—May Robson, Mary Carlisle, Alan Hale. RKO-Radio. In celebration of the nobility of women High School teachers. A fine old High School principal, and how her sturdy efforts to build character bore fruit, in spite of political antagonism. An unusual subject. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family.*

HELLDORADO—Richard Arlen, Madge Evans, Ralph Bellamy. Fox. What happened when a group of strangers took refuge in an abandoned mining town during a storm. A lot of originality, humor and likeable people, make it a particularly pleasant picture. *Family.*

HERE IS MY HEART—Bing Crosby, Kitty Carlisle. From play "The Grand Duchess and the Waiter" by Alfred Savoir. Paramount. An amusing story about a wealthy man who plays waiter in order to be near the woman he loves. Well acted with fairly good music. *Family.*

HOME ON THE RANGE—Randolph Scott, Evelyn Brent, Jackie Coogan. From novel "Code of the West" by Zane Grey. Paramount. An entertaining Western romance with a plot which does not follow the usual formula. *Family.*

LITTLE MEN—Erin O'Brien-Moore, Ralph Morgan. From novel by Louisa M. Alcott. Mascot. Boys' school life in old Plumfield as told in Louisa Alcott's sequel to "Little Women." All the children in the picture are good but the rest of the cast are pretty bad. Somewhat over-sentimentalized in places, but on the whole entertaining. *Family. Junior matinee.*

***LITTLE MINISTER, THE**—Katharine Hepburn, John Beal. From novel and play by Sir James M. Barrie. RKO-Radio. A very good translation of Barrie's novel to the screen—the romance of the young Scottish minister and the girl who masqueraded as a gypsy. The atmosphere is excellent, the cast good, with John Beal carrying off chief honors. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family.*

LOTTERY LOVER—Pat Paterson, Lew Ayres, Peggy Fears. Fox. A comedy about naval cadets having a gay time in Paris. Cheerful tunes and amusing nonsense. *Family.*

MAN WHO RECLAIMED HIS HEAD, THE—Claude Rains, Joan Bennett. From play by Jean Bart. Universal. An intensely dramatic anti-war story laid in Paris which tells of the horrible effects war had on a sensitive pacifist. The acting of Claude Rains is excellent, the story interesting with not too much propaganda. *Mature.*

(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Dr. Myron Tracy Scudder

ON December 21st of the year just passed the National Board of Review suffered a very real and deeply felt loss. On that day occurred the death of Dr. Myron Tracy Scudder, for the last two decades one of the Board's leading and ablest members and since 1922 its honored Treasurer. He is mourned not only by many members who were his contemporaries on the Board at the time of his joining the organization, but also by many newer comers to its activities who came to regard him as an integral force in the work. There is a feeling of loss of one of those very rare people who, whatever they consecrate themselves to, accept the obligations of duty undertaken and put service before self.



Dr. Myron Tracy Scudder

the golden rule along pathways that seemed to him to lead to a better world of men and women. In his capacity as an outstanding educator, he became an outstanding humanitarian and an unswerving friend to the causes he espoused. Coming to this country early, as he progressed along the lines of his chosen work, these interests grew to be so many as to make those who knew him well and were familiar with his history wonder that such abundant zest for service should be packed into one individual. (A biographical sketch appeared in the National Board of Review Magazine for December 1929, and we refer readers to that issue who wish to refresh their minds as to the details of Dr. Scudder's career). For

Born in Palamanir, India, September 28, 1860, into a family of missionaries, Dr. Scudder all his life had the light upon him. From young manhood up he was guided by

the purpose of this memorial word let it suffice to say that his outstanding educational gifts were developed at Rutgers College, Yale and Clark Universities, through

twenty-five years of teaching effort as principal of numerous high schools, culminating in his appointment as Professor of Education at Rutgers; that this educational labor was accompanied by lecture courses in New York University, the Universities of Virginia and Maine, Wellesley, the University of Wisconsin and the University of Pennsylvania; that his pen meanwhile was constantly busy in a great variety of ways of service in the field of education and related fields, and that his crowning interest came as President of Scudder School in New York City, an office and duty he assumed in 1911, where the stamp of his personality will be lasting. Aside from this lifelong activity as a teacher, he was one of the founders of, or subsequently became connected with, at least a dozen of the more prominent educational, social service, recreational and civic organizations, most of them national. And his more personal interests were as many and varied.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of his personality—always so robust, vigorous and bountiful that the passing of years left little mark upon him—was his interest in the sea. An athlete of ability in his younger days, he preserved to the last an enthusiasm for all forms of outdoor life, but it was to the art of sailing that he gave this enthusiasm the fullest expression. He held a master mariner's license, and like many another man who knew and felt ships and their comradeship, a strong and freely-given comradeship marked his relations with people.

Here, indeed, was a life of enthusiasm, idealism, energy tirelessly expressed—of good-will translated into helpful action—up till, almost literally, the moment of his decease. The National Board of Review feels very proud to have had such a personage for so many years connected in a leading capacity with its work, first as a review member, then as a member of its General and Executive Committees, during which time, throughout, his enthusiasm was contagious, his buoyancy encouraging, his counsel wise, vigorous and forward-looking. The Board has been inspired and often guided by him. It sorrows deeply in his loss. And it faces the task of finding his

successor with full sensibility of the earnest interest he gave for such a long time to its Treasurership.

Annual Conference of the National Board

THE Eleventh Annual Conference of the National Board of Review will be held on March 7th to 9th at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. Our members will note that this presents a change in date from former years. The decision to hold it on this date was decided upon after many expressions were made to us that the usual bad weather of February offered a great handicap to attendance or made it an impossibility. We can not change our weather but we can set a date when it certainly will be better for our motoring delegates and the visitors wishing to take full advantage of New York.

Word of the program will come to you soon but this notification is published so that you can make your plans to attend accordingly.

Selected Pictures for Children's Showings

EACH year the difficulty of obtaining the old favorite films, silent as well as sound, for children's showings increases, but for those who show these fine old pictures occasionally it is good news that such ones as *The Covered Wagon*, *Peter Pan*, *Snow White* and *The Vanishing American* are still available. The National Board includes them in a list recently compiled of pictures for children's special showings which is divided into the following sections—"Old Favorites Still Available," "Animal, Exploration and Educational Films," "Recent Junior Matinee Features," "Westerns," "Serials" and "Short Subjects—Cartoons, Informationals, Comedies and Novelties." This list is priced at 10 cents and may be secured from the office of the Board.

Robert Flaherty Tells How He Made "Man of Aran"

The choice of Robert Flaherty's latest picture "The Man of Aran" as the best film of the year by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays and the reason for that choice is given in the department of this Magazine devoted to the activities of that Committee. In connection with that announcement we felt it would be of interest to our readers to hear the story of how the idea for this unusual film came to Mr. Flaherty and how it was executed amid great difficulties resulting in a film which has received world-wide acclaim.

SEVERAL years ago aboard a liner bound for Europe I fell into conversation one evening with a young Irishman from Cork. We got to talking on the inevitable topic—the depression, the hard times all over the world.

"Hard times?" he said. "You don't know what hard times are. Let me tell you of the Aran Islands, where I have been. These islands are barren rocks, without trees. Before the people can grow their potatoes—almost the only food they can win from the land—they have to *make* the soil to grow them in! For the rest of their food they have to go to sea in little canvas boats, unbelievably primitive. And this sea they have to brave in these cockleshells is one of the worst in the world."

I was thrilled. "Are these islands far away?" I asked.

"No," was the astonishing reply. "Just fifteen hours from London!"

Eventually I went to England. I hadn't been able to get the Aran Islands out of my mind, and when later I met Mr. Michael Balcon, the brilliant producer for the Gaumont-British Company, I found myself, almost unconsciously, telling him about Aran, that I was sure a fine film might be made there—a film whose theme would be the struggle of man against the sea. To my delight Mr. Balcon's response was enthusiastic and instantaneous. Within a fortnight my wife and I made a survey of these islands, which lie off the west coast of Ireland, thirty miles out from the old city of Galway.

The Aran Islands are three in number,

and on the largest one, Inishmore, we decided to make our headquarters. The most important consideration was a supply of fresh water for our film developing, and Inishmore had a better supply than the other islands. Inishmore is nine miles long by about a mile-and-a-half wide, and has perhaps twelve hundred inhabitants.

Our crew at this time, besides my wife and myself, consisted of a young English lad, John Taylor, who could, and what is more, had to do everything. Later on our unit was joined by my brother David with his Akeley camera.

The first thing to do, and a most important one, was to choose from among the islanders someone to be the perfect diplomatist in our dealings with them. For when one comes into a strange community to make a film of that community, negotiations to begin with are delicate indeed. This man we found in the person of Pat Mullen, who, though an Aran Islander by birth and preference, had travelled far in his earlier days and had spent seventeen years in America. Pat, a born leader, was just the man for delicate negotiations.

We established ourselves at a place called Kilmurvey, on the leeward side of the island. Here we were fortunate enough to rent from a London lady a fine cottage, the finest indeed on the island. There were two springs of fresh water nearby, and there was also an old stone wharf-house which might be made to do for our film laboratory. The cottage wasn't big enough for living quarters and a studio too; so, with island labor and the hard gray limestone rock of the island we built another—a real Irish cottage, with a turf roof covered over by a thatch of straw.

One room was our "set," where we shot our interior scenes. This room was typical of all the cottages on the island, with a great open fireplace where in winter there was always a peat fire burning and a welcome for the islanders. Another room was our projection theatre and cutting room,



Michael Dillane, the boy, first of the three characters chosen for "Man of Aran".

where day by day and month after month the film was viewed and cut and gradually took shape on the screen. Our collaborator in the cutting was the able and enthusiastic young Englishman, John Goldman.

We were a good many weeks building the cottage and converting the old stone wharf-house into a laboratory. But all this time we were engaged in a still more important phase of our film production—that was, in gaining the confidence and friendship of the islanders, and more particularly, looking for types suitable for the picture.

This is the method we have followed in all our films. We select a group of the most attractive and appealing characters we can find, to represent a family, and through them tell our story. It is always a long and difficult process, this type-finding, for it is surprising how few faces stand the test of the camera.

Our first discovery was young Michael Dillane, a real "broth of a boy" about twelve years old. We saw him first at a

wedding dance, and he won our hearts at once. His parents were poor fisherfolk and needed badly the money that Michael's employment would bring them; nevertheless it took Pat Mullen several weeks to obtain the mother's permission. She feared that our ultimate aim was to take the boy's religion from him.

Maggie Dirrane, the woman of Aran, was glad to come and work for the pictures; it would mean a little extra money toward the support of her struggling family. Maggie has four young children, and though her life had always been a hard one, she always had a smile and a greeting for you, and the room would actually light up whenever Maggie entered.

Finding the Man of Aran was not so easy. And when at last we did find him he didn't want to come at all. Colman King, known as "The Tiger," was a splendid specimen of manhood, a blacksmith by trade, but also of necessity a farmer, a fisherman and a builder of boats. By boats

I mean the curragh, the frail fishing craft of the islands, survivor of the ancient coracle, a light wicker frame covered with tarred canvas—so light that on shore it has to be roped down so as not to be carried away by the wind; yet a better boat in a big sea I have never seen. But to return to the Tiger—he was proud, dignified and a bit aloof from his fellows. Several weeks of negotiating, however, ended in a triumph for our diplomatist Pat. The Man of Aran capitulated, and we were happy. Our family was now complete.

By this time we had gained the full confidence of the shy islanders. Suspicion of us had vanished. Indeed, there was now actual rivalry to be featured in the film.

At last we were settled down to the business of making the picture. We had brought over from England an electric light plant, and John Taylor had set it up and wired the laboratory and the cottages, so that now many of the islanders saw electric lights for the first time. John had installed a pump at the spring and laid pipes to the laboratory. Finally, he had the developing tanks set up, and the large drums for drying the film were turning at last. This modern machinery was, of course, a great novelty to the islanders. A visitor from Dublin aptly described our camp as "a twentieth century compound with the Middle Ages looking on over the fence."

There are no motor cars on Aran, no cinemas, no luxuries of any kind. The young man from Cork had not exaggerated the barrenness of the island. To the islanders their hard-won soil is more precious than gold. They would not part with a foot of their land, barren as it is, for any consideration.

Nor had he exaggerated the sea. All the way from America the North Atlantic sweeps in and hurls itself against the high rugged coast, sometimes climbing three hundred feet to the cliff tops and then sweeping in over the land.

Drowning here is no more than a natural death. Like most fishermen, the Aran Islanders do not swim.

Never have I worked with finer or more devoted people than these Irishmen of Aran. There was not one of the crew who

would not have risked his life cheerfully for the picture. And I must confess that on more than one occasion there was grave danger. The men in the curragh in the storm scene were in actual peril of their lives. There were no camera tricks here; nor were these scenes shot in the studio, as some insist. The sea was as big as it appears on the screen.

Altogether we spent eighteen months on Aran—a long time, it is true. There were many setbacks, technical matters, most of them, and of course, always the weather. For all of the picture, save a few brief shots inside the cottage, was dependent upon sunlight, and often there would be no sun for a week or more on end.

But with our cast and crew there never was any trouble. Pat Mullen is justly proud of the fact that they held together to the end. With each one of them this film of their simple, heroic lives was a deeply personal thing. It was themselves they were showing before the world, and they wanted the showing to be as fine as they could make it.

Amateur Cinema League Selections

THE fifth annual selection of the ten best amateur motion pictures of the year has been announced by Movie Makers, magazine of the Amateur Cinema League, Inc., with headquarters in New York City. Showing, for the first time since the rating was established, a marked increase in pictures of imaginative quality, films winning the ten best choice and achieving honorable mention were made in the United States, Canada, Australia and Mexico. New York City amateurs provided five of the selections. All winners of ten best and honorable mention classifications are members of the Amateur Cinema League, an international organization of amateur filmers, whose president is Hiram Percy Maxim. Col. Roy W. Winton, Director of the League is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Board and of its Better Films National Council.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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1934

THE choices made by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays as the best American films released during the year that ended December 20, 1934, were:

The Count of Monte Cristo—a lively and satisfying picturization of Alexander Dumas' novel, a wig-and-costume melodrama done with sufficient verve and glamour, and an engaging romantic actor in the person of Robert Donat.

Crime Without Passion—an example of what expert movie craftsmanship can do working independently, of unusual interest technically and introducing two new acting personalities, Claude Rains and Margo.

Eskimo—a striking picture of primitive life in the far north, made with enormous care and effectiveness.

The First World War—an important historical document compiled of newsreels expertly put together with remarkably literate commentary.

It Happened One Night—a vastly entertaining fiction, full of the good humor that makes Frank Capra's films so likeable and made with the unobtrusive skill and individual style that distinguish its director.

The Lost Patrol—an exciting tale of the wiping out of a British patrol lost in the Arabian desert, a model of the old-time Kipling story of soldier heroism.

Lot in Sodom—an impressive, richly impressionistic version of the Biblical tale, of Lot and his family, showing a rare ima-

ginative gift in the use of the motion picture camera.

No Greater Glory—unusual in subject, an interesting experiment in allegory, using boys' games to objectify how wars are made and fought.

The Thin Man—a gay murder mystery, a high example of the happy use of wit, humor and action in a talking motion picture.

Viva Villa—all the sturdy virtues of Western melodrama used to perpetuate the legend of Mexico's bandit hero.

Each of these films displays in one way or another either some new method or a highly successful use of some old method in adapting the motion picture medium to the special intentions of the particular film. Two pictures received equal votes from the Committee as the best American film of the year—two utterly different pictures, *It Happened One Night* and *Lot in Sodom*. The first is romantic comedy of the popular fiction type, but directed with a happy skill that got every possible effectiveness out of its material. The second, a short film suited only to rather special audiences and not released into the ordinary picture theatres, was made by a highly efficient group of amateurs—so efficient that the word amateur is not an accurate definition of them—headed by J. S. Watson, Jr.

The foreign films shown in this country the past year have not been many, and very few of them notable. The Committee chose five as outstanding:

The Blue Light—a story of the Dolomite Mountains, remarkable for its beautiful

photographic effects and for the atmosphere created by its minor actors.

Catherine the Great—to be remembered chiefly for the acting of one of the screen's finest actresses, Elizabeth Bergner.

The Constant Nymph—a fine translation of Margaret Kennedy's novel to the screen, tender and lovely, particularly in the sympathetic acting of its principal characters.

Madame Bovary—a skillful, straightforward screening of Flaubert's novel, tremendously well acted.

Man of Aran—Robert Flaherty's picture of the life of a small family on one of the Aran Islands.

Man of Aran was unanimously chosen the best film of the year, made anywhere. Technically it is a superb piece of motion picture making, a work that no other art could have produced. It has something of the poetry of Synge in it, something of the human interest of "Twenty Years A-Growing"—in addition it has the magnificent sweep and epic quality of Flaherty's own poetical nature working through the camera, translating the simplicity of Irish fishermen struggling for existence against barren soil and rough seas and devastating storms into beautiful and stirring pictures. It is one of the rare films that does not belong to this year or any other year—it should always be where lovers of beauty could look at it often.

In addition to the films selected for their artistic values by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, the vastly larger Review Committee voted this year for the ten pictures they enjoyed most. These pictures, in the order determined by the number of votes they received, were:

One Night of Love

The House of Rothschild

The Barretts of Wimpole Street

The Thin Man

It Happened One Night

The Count of Monte Cristo

Of Human Bondage

Queen Christina

Treasure Island

What Every Woman Knows

The last three received an equal number of votes, and were closely crowded by *The Gay Divorcee* and *Judge Priest*.

Frank Capra's Latest

THOSE who follow the art of Hollywood with sympathy and no illusions, will know that the industry is at its best when it is dealing with no problems whatever, when it is thinking just as little as it can (which is very little), when it has got hold of some light empty piece of plot-making and is putting all its marvelous technical resources into building comedy out of likeable people and familiar situations. In short when it is making pictures like *Sing and Like It*, or *The Gay Divorcee*, or *Broadway Bill*, which is Mr. Frank Capra's latest production.

Mark Hellinger wrote the original story, but if you want to know how feeble the creative underpinnings were before Capra and his writer, Robert Riskin, took it over, you have only to imagine what the film would be like if it had been made by some magic-lantern outfit. Warner Baxter doesn't like business. He doesn't like the way Walter Connolly regiments the small-town ruling family he has married into, becoming thereby one of the executive in-laws. He likes the ponies. So he breaks with the family and takes a horse off to the races, to make a fortune that way. No money, he has to raise fees, has to keep the horse alive. Things go on the down-beat for him until Myrna Loy shows up, with a little cash and the lucky rooster. She is the younger sister, also the romantic element. After that things go on the down-beat a little more, the horse is attached, his owner put in stir. Hope gone. What shall we do? Well, the bad man arranges for everything, in order to safeguard his odds, putting a crooked jockey on the horse, etc. And the horse wins the race in spite of it (a very exciting race) and dies at the finish, and everybody is penitent (this scene is maudlin, awful), and Myrna Loy goes home. But it is all right, because Mr. Baxter comes back later, his fortune made, to carry off the princess from the dark tower.

There is your racing climax, your romantic interest, the whole story—and a very old triangler sort of thing it is. But it doesn't matter in the slightest. Every turn of the familiar plot has had a certain kind

of alchemy practiced on it, it has been made to develop from some fresh and believable piece of business—as between, say, the feed merchant and the Baxter faction, the Colonel and his victims, Mr. Baxter and Miss Loy. By this I don't mean that it is one of those things where a few plot intentions are used as a framework to hang musical comedy skits on, and then forgotten. Capra's way with romantic comedy is one of complete relevance, everything arising from some natural need within the story, characters developing in perspective, etc. To start with, of course, he has a fine flair for what will be charming and true in people, whether he is directing a comedy figure or a love scene or the crowd at a race, and he arranges his action to bring it out. And when it comes to arranging action, Capra has certainly one of the most supple techniques you can see on the screen, with just the right time-sense to strike when his iron is hot, and not before or after. Result is, the dialogue and motion of each particular scene go off effortlessly, and everything moves along, one sequence into another, giving a fine easy motion to the whole.

All of which may seem to put a good deal of stress on direction, but from the way movies look at present, I should say that really good ones cannot be made unless some sound and thorough craftsman has the final say in putting together all the constituent parts. Flash photography won't make a good picture, though there might be found some to think otherwise, nor ambitions to experiment, nor all the stars in the world. The cast of *Broadway Bill*—always the thing we see first and most easily—is good all the way down the line, from Mr. Baxter and Miss Loy down through Walter Connolly, Lynne Overman, Raymond Walburn and Charles C. Wilson to Clarence Muse; but the casting has been left to the director, who knew not only what he wanted in the way of people, but how to get it out of them. Many directors, if given full authority over a picture, would go arty on us or something, and perish. Mr. Capra is one of the few who has found that making a picture that can be seen with pleasure by hundreds of thousands need not in itself be barred from the achievements of the fine arts. He has taken

what he is given and worked it over into terms of his own medium, without all the silly aping of other models that has been such a drag on the industry. His material is necessarily restricted and shallow, but he admits it frankly (it is always possible that a good solid plot might faze him) and goes to work; and when at work he shows himself as one of the first artists in the field.

O. F.

Young People's Ten Best

LISTING of the best films of the year being in order at this season members of the Young Reviewers Club of the National Board have, as the members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays and the adult Review Committee, compiled their favorite films of the past twelve months.

The following two lists represent their recorded selections in order of preference, the first that of the boys and girls from 8 through 12 years of age and the second those from 13 through 17 years.

| 8-12 years | 13-17 years |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>The House of Rothschild</i> | <i>House of Rothschild</i> |
| <i>Little Miss Marker</i> | <i>The Barretts of Wimpole Street</i> |
| <i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i> | <i>One Night of Love</i> |
| <i>The Gay Divorcee</i> | <i>Count of Monte Cristo</i> |
| <i>One Night of Love</i> | <i>Little Miss Marker</i> |
| <i>The Barretts of Wimpole Street</i> | <i>Viva Villa</i> |
| <i>Now and Forever</i> | <i>The Thin Man</i> |
| <i>Treasure Island</i> | <i>It Happened One Night</i> |
| <i>Baby Take a Bow</i> | <i>Of Human Bondage</i> |
| <i>Peck's Bad Boy</i> | <i>Treasure Island</i> |
| | <i>The Gay Divorcee</i> |
| | <i>Cleopatra</i> |

In the younger children's list the second, third and fourth named pictures tied for second place and the last two for tenth place. In the older group's selection the eighth and ninth pictures listed tied for ninth place and the last three pictures for tenth place. The pictures listed by the boys and girls ran up into scores and some of the ones which missed out by only a vote or two were *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, *The Cat's Paw*, *Here Comes the Navy*, *The Lost Patrol*, *No Greater Glory*, *Servants' Entrance*, *Judge Priest*, *Caravan* and *Operator* 13.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

For New York's Children

A thousand children from Greenwich Village and the lower west side of New York City met in Washington Square on Saturday morning, December 22nd, to greet Santa Claus, dedicate the huge community Christmas tree in the park and parade throughout the neighborhood. This was however not only a Christmas celebration but a demonstration on the part of the children of their support for the community better films movement.

For the children's march ended at the Eighth Street Playhouse, an attractive little theatre, where they attended a special junior matinee sponsored by the Lower West Side Motion Picture Council and its ninety-seven cooperating social, religious and educational agencies. This, the Council's first junior matinee, was put on as an experiment in controlled and scientifically selected motion picture programs for children.

I Am Suzanne and Mickey Mouse shorts were featured in the program specially prepared for the children's entertainment by the Lower West Side Motion Picture Council. This picture presenting a gay story and the Podrecca puppets, which was chosen by the Council as one highly recommended for junior matinees by the National Board of Review, proved a happy choice for the children at the two shows, found necessary to accomodate all, were most enthusiastic.

The Lower West Side Motion Picture Council is a permanent department of the Council of Lower West Side Social Agencies, and as such is the motion picture service agency for the people reached through the agencies included in this area. In expanding its activities, the active support is sought of every organization and individual who realizes that the motion picture is a vital social, educational and artistic weapon which can shape the cultural, moral, and ethical concepts of children and adults as well, to the end of healthy and constructive social ideas and habits.

The Chairman of the Council is Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher, Associate Professor of Education, New York University, who has done much valuable research work in connection with the subject of motion pictures and children and with other leisure time activities of children. The Junior Matinee Committee worked under the Chairmanship of the editor of this department of the Magazine, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Lower West Side Motion Picture Council, who finds it of value to see applied the junior matinee ideas which have been developed throughout the country by various Council groups.

"Musical Moods" Contest

A Chance for Councils to Interest
Their Musical Members and to
Increase Their Funds

\$ 1000 in cash prizes is to be awarded by Audio Productions, Inc., and First Division Exchanges to clubs or individual members presenting the best scenarios for pictures to be included in a new series of *Musical Moods*.

Musical Moods present the latest development in recorded musical entertainment with visual accompaniment and are the first three-color Technicolor subjects that have been photographed out-of-doors.

Mr. Robert C. Bruce, well-known producer of scenic pictures, made eleven of these films in all parts of the world. Five were made in Europe last summer, one in Ireland, three in Italy and one in Switzerland. These unusual films are recorded on Western Electric Wide Range Sound System with orchestras under the direction of such well-known conductors as Hans Lange, Gustave Haenschen and Rosario Bourdon.

After a recent survey completed by Audio Productions it was found that the average movie-going public is really hungry for good music and that the average theatre program is too fast paced and needs its

tempo varied. And thus these films fill a double need.

The rules of the contest are as follows:

Clubs may enter as a single unit or members may enter individually.

The prizes will be awarded to the individual members or clubs presenting the seven best scenarios of pictures to be included in the new series of *Musical Moods*. The scenarios shall embody detailed ideas for pictorial accompaniment for any musical score except those already used in the present series.

The club representative or the individual contestant must go to the local theatre and secure information as to when the *Musical Moods* will be shown.

Contestants must have seen at least 5 *Musical Moods* so that suggestions submitted will be in conformity with the established pattern of these films.

Application blanks will be available at your theatre and must be filled out and signed, and must state what *Musical Moods* the club representatives or the individual contestants have seen, when and where.

All material submitted shall become the property of Audio Productions, Inc., and may be used by it in whole or in part for its own purposes without liability or obligation. None of the material submitted will be returned.

Scenarios for the visual accompaniment of musical selections already used in the *Musical Moods* series will be automatically eliminated. The selections already used are listed on the back of the application blank.

No subject shall be under 5 or over 7 minutes in length.

Further details can be learned from First Division Exchanges, Inc., 1270 Sixth Avenue, New York City.

A list of the subjects, taken from well-known musical selections, is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>In a Monastery</i> | <i>Countryside</i> |
| <i>Garden</i> | <i>Melodies</i> |
| <i>Mexican Idyll</i> | <i>Mediterranean</i> |
| <i>By the Waters of</i> | <i>Songs</i> |
| <i>Minnetonka</i> | <i>Barcarolle</i> |
| <i>Hymn to the Sun</i> | <i>In a Mountain</i> |
| <i>Les Preludes</i> | <i>Pass</i> |
| <i>Schubert's Unfinish-</i> | <i>Fingal's Cave</i> |
| <i>ed Symphony</i> | <i>Waltz in A Flat Major</i> |

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Italian Caprice</i> | <i>Dance of the Hours</i> |
| <i>Voices of Spring</i> | <i>Air for the G String</i> |
| <i>Irish Melody</i> | <i>Liebestraum</i> |

These subjects are now being distributed in theatres throughout the world by First Division Exchanges, Inc., and the first five releases are: *In a Monastery Garden*, *Fingal's Cave*, *Mexican Idyll*, *Liebestraum*, and *Dance of the Hours*.

Others of this series will be released about a month apart and it will be to the advantage of Better Films Councils to suggest to their managers the showing of these subjects.

High Schools Study Films

THE Young Reviewers Club of the National Board as the protagonist in the growing field of youthful motion picture study clubs, takes pride and pleasure in bringing word of new groups organized with like purposes. The Motion Picture Club of Wadleigh High School in New York City has sent in the following interesting resume of their organization through its president, Sigrid Conway:

Ten representatives from Wadleigh High School were asked to attend the meetings of the Young Reviewers Club of the National Board of Review last year. After attending the meetings we reported the aims and ideals of this organization to the head of the English department in our school. Because she thought these ideals were so splendid, she suggested forming a club with similar aims and ideals in Wadleigh. The ten original representatives liked this idea and these girls planned the procedure for the first meeting. A large number of girls attended and this group was really too large to accomplish anything in a discussion club. The aim of the club was explained and an example of what we hoped our meetings would be like was given, officers were elected, meeting dates chosen and the Wadleigh Motion Picture Club became a reality.

At the next meeting there was a group of about thirty—these girls were the "cream of the crop." They liked the aims of the club and wanted it to become a success. They thought it an excellent idea to raise their standards of a good motion picture.

They wanted to appreciate good motion pictures, to be able to criticize all pictures intelligently and to have a good time meeting with other girls interested in the same subject.

The meetings have been held regularly since the date the club was founded. They are carried on informally—the president calls the meeting to order, the secretary takes the attendance quietly without going through the schoolroom procedure of calling the roll, the minutes are read. Then the picture is decided upon which will be discussed at the next meeting. This gives all the girls a chance to see the picture. Often we plan to go as a group to a picture that is playing in a neighborhood theatre. Our sponsor has been kind enough to loan us a book on the technical side of motion pictures. Every meeting one girl takes this book and prepares a short talk on one of the chapters. We have found that knowing a little about the technicality of pictures has helped us in intelligent discussion. Next we discuss the picture we have chosen for this particular meeting. The president makes a few introductory remarks to set the discussion going. The girls desiring to speak raise their hands. We have found this system more effective than just having anyone talk out. We consider the story of the picture first, then we discuss the cast, their costumes, their make-up and their acting. We discuss the director and his work carefully. We consider the photography and the “props.” We decide on the entertainment value and the educational value of the picture. By considering all the points in the discussion we find the actual value of the picture. The girls tell any little amusing thing they know or have read about the making of the picture or the actors playing in it. We also pick out the movie “boners.” This part of the discussion is very entertaining and interesting to all.

Probably the two best pictures we discussed this term were *One Night of Love* and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. We all liked both pictures and our decision about them is as follows: *One Night of Love*. The story was an old and very much used tale. The acting, singing, photography and

direction were all excellent. We hope the producers have been sufficiently encouraged to make more pictures using the so-called classic music. The title *One Night of Love* was not suitable and proved very deceiving to the public in general. It was one of the finest pictures we have ever seen and we recommend it. *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. The story was very good. The cast was well chosen and their acting was very fine. We did think that Fredric March overacted slightly. The period costumes were charming and the “props” were appropriate. It would have been a good idea to have a few words flashed on the screen telling the audience that the story was an incident from the lives of the two poets, Robert Browning and his wife. The picture was excellent though it was rather sad. We liked the clever manner of mixing humor and pathos.

“We wish to thank the Young Reviewers for giving us such an excellent idea for a club,” writes Miss Conway in closing.

Another wide-awake high school organization is the Motion Picture Appreciation Club of Jamaica (Long Island, N. Y.) High School with 56 boys and girls as members. This club meets every Friday afternoon with their English teacher as sponsor, also. The pictures are selected for the week and a certain number appointed to see these selections and report on them at the next meeting. In addition to these criticisms there is also a guest speaker who tells the members of some phase of the motion picture, and the usual business routine, all carried out according to parliamentary rule. A mimeographed club paper, *The Movie Critic*, is published bi-monthly and deserves much commendation for its attractive format and interesting material.

There is a most gratifying interest in Rochester, N. Y., in motion picture activity. The schools, the exhibitors and the newspapers are cooperative and interested in any plans for the support and use of the best pictures in the city. A recent instance of cooperative activity has been sent to us by Mrs. Hugh A. Smith, Jr., president of the local Better Films Council, in a report of the interest and space given by Mr. George L. David, motion picture editor of the Ro-

chester Democrat and Chronicle, to the study of the motion picture in the schools of Rochester. Mr. David who is a member of the Rochester Better Films Council, wrote of his interest and its outcome as follows:

Early last summer this department urged at some length that classes in photoplay appreciation be introduced into all of the Rochester senior high schools, and in the junior high schools, if feasible, in the new 1934-35 academic year. Our advocacy of this step appeared to stir considerable interest, and Superintendent of Schools James M. Spinning has regarded the proposal favorably.

Our interest in the matter had been heightened by a demonstration of the work in this field done by the pioneer Rochester school group, conducted by Miss Margaret Holley at Madison. It was given at the final meeting of the Rochester Better Films Council last spring and obviously everyone present was impressed by the intelligent interest and taste in respect to films that Miss Holley had developed in her pupils.

What she had accomplished at Madison in an experimental path-breaking way could be done in all of our higher public schools we felt. Now we are looking forward to early action by the school authorities in initiating class work in photoplays. It is desirable, it seems to us, that the start be made without much delay because soon some of the most desirable pictures of the 1934-35 year will be presented in our first-run theatres. Already, just before the schools opened, *Treasure Island* has been shown here. Of course it will return in second and third-run houses.

Such photoplays as *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *David Copperfield*, *The Little Minister*, *Judge Priest*, *Great Expectations*, *The Forsythe Saga*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Three Musketeers*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and others of literary note will be released from time to time, and it would be well for movie classes, or English classes studying pictures as well as printed fiction, to be prepared to study them as they come along.

To facilitate the work of the school classes, this department has arranged with the managements of the downtown theatres to admit these groups free of charge when

accompanied by their teachers. William H. Cadoret, director of the five theatres operated here by the Comerford interests and managing director Lester Pollock of Loew's Rochester have generously provided this opportunity for established student groups. They will be pleased to have one class a week as their guests in each of these theatres in the afternoon, before 6 o'clock. All of these houses would, therefore, accommodate six classes weekly which it is more than likely will be ready to avail themselves of the opportunity.

The undertaking here will be in line with what has been done, or what there are plans for doing, in many public schools throughout the nation.

(Continued from page 2)

MARINES ARE COMING, THE—William Haines, Conrad Nagel, Esther Ralston. *Mascot*. The rivalry between a captain and a lieutenant of the marines, with William Haines playing pleasantly a typical irresponsible, cocksure part. A good deal of humor mixed with adventure and romance. *Family*.

***MIGHTY BARNUM, THE**—Wallace Beery, Adolphe Menjou, Virginia Bruce. *From novel by Gene Fowler. United Artists*. Colorful comedy based on the career of P. T. Barnum, not always faithful to fact but unusually entertaining. *Family*.

MILLS OF THE GODS—May Robson, Victor Jory, Fay Wray. *Columbia*. The story of a wealthy woman and the trouble she has with her unsympathetic family who walk out and leave her to face the mill strikes alone. The story holds the interest and is well acted. *Family*.

ONE HOUR LATE—Joe Morrison, Helen Twelvetrees. *Paramount*. Light comedy about a boy who makes good as a radio crooner, but who wins the girl he loves by his daring in an elevator mishap. The music is catchy and Joe Morrison of stage and radio fame, has a pleasing voice. *Family*.

***PRESIDENT VANISHES, THE**—Arthur Byron, Janet Beecher. *Paramount*. A timely picture of anti-war propaganda. The president of the United States cleverly conceives and carries out a plan to keep the country out of war. The story is interestingly told with the suspense held and the acting throughout is excellent. *Family*.

PRIVATE LIFE OF DON JUAN, THE—Douglas Fairbanks, Benita Hume, Merle Oberon. *United Artists*. A comedy, with satiric points, about Don Juan in his middle-age, overpowered by the Great Lover legend that has grown up around him. Brilliantly produced, and satisfactory as a comedy, but not the kind of character Doug's early fame is associated with. *Mature*.

ROMANCE IN MANHATTAN—*Francis Lederer, Ginger Rogers. RKO-Radio.* Excellent family entertainment telling a story of young love in present day New York. A girl and her kid brother "adopt" a Czecho-Slovakian boy who sees America only as the land of promise and opportunity. The sentiment, humor and pathos are unusually well blended and the leading characters give a worthy performance assisted by a good supporting cast. *Family.*

SECRET BRIDE, THE—*Barbara Stanwyck, Warren William. From play by Leonard Ide. Warner.* An exciting mystery melodrama with a political background. The daughter of the governor discovers, after her elopement with the attorney general, that her father faces impeachment. They keep their marriage a secret while they strive to clear his name. *Mature.*

***SEQUOIA**—*Jean Parker, Russell Hardie. From novel "Malibu" by Vance Hoyt. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Laid in the Sequoia forest, where a fawn and a young puma grow up as friends instead of enemies. A remarkable animal picture, in which a rascally trapper is the villain, beautifully photographed, exciting and moving and with a tremendous appeal for lovers of the wild. Unusual in every respect. *Suggested for schools and libraries; for church use; worth being kept permanently available. Family. Junior matinee.*

SILVER STREAK, THE—*Charles Starrett, Sally Blane. RKO-Radio.* An exciting and timely story of the building of the first stream-line train. The photography is excellent, and both the shots of the new train and the construction work on Boulder Dam are interesting and educational. The story works up to an exciting climax with a record run across the continent. *Family. Junior matinee.*

SING SING NIGHTS—*Conway Tearle, Hardie Albright, Boots Mallory. From novel by Henry Stephens Keller. Monogram.* A novel story, well produced and acted, about the means used to find out who committed a murder of which three men confessed themselves guilty. Mature in interest, though nothing objectionable in it for family audience. There is a hint of the war-guilt of munitions manufacturers in it. *Mature.*

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART—*Mary Astor, Roger Pryor, Baby Jane. Universal.* An entertaining story with a novel twist. A homeless girl is befriended by a politician and becomes his most ardent supporter in his campaign for election until her faith in him is shattered and plenty of things start to happen. *Mature.*

***SWEET ADELINE**—*Irene Dunne, Donald Woods. From musical comedy by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. Warner.* The delightful musical comedy success excellently presented on the screen with Irene Dunne singing very charmingly. In addition, much amusing comedy particularly by Hugh Herbert, and several elaborate sequences in the usual fine Warner manner. *Family.*

***UNFINISHED SYMPHONY**—*Marta Eggerth, Hans Jaray, Helen Chandler. Gaumont-British.* A charming story of Franz Schubert's unfinished symphony which like his love for a beautiful countess, he left unfinished. The music is beautiful and the photography and acting excellent. A European production. *Family.*

WEST OF THE PECOS—*Richard Dix, Martha Sleeper. From novel by Zane Grey. RKO-Radio.* One of the better Westerns, involving the adventures of Southerners pioneering into Texas after the Civil War. Colorful and full of action, with a somewhat different heroine. *Family.*

WESTERNER, THE—*Tim McCoy, Marion Schilling. Columbia.* Western story in which the hero sets out to avenge his father's death. Plenty of action and good riding. *Family.*

WICKED WOMAN, A—*Mady Christians, Jean Parker, Charles Bickford. From novel by Anne Austen. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* The story of a mother, and her struggles to make a good life for her children in spite of a sordid past. A really fine character which introduces a new star who should attract a large following. Delicate handling of the parts that might have been lurid. She was not wicked. *Mature.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

COUNTY FAIR, A (Laughing with Medbury Series)—*Columbia.*

FILMING THE GREAT (Newsreel Cameraman Adventures)—Various rulers of the world. *Fox.*

GENEVA BY THE LAKE (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox.*

GOING PLACES NOS. 6-7—*Universal.*

ISLE OF BERMUDA, THE (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox.*

MOTORCYCLE COSSACKS—Mexican motorcycle police. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 6—*Paramount.*

PATHE TOPICS NO. 2—*RKO-Radio.*

REMEMBER THE ALAMO (See America First Series)

—*Vitaphone.* Early Texas. *Suggested for schools and libraries. Junior.*

***SPORTLIGHT COCKTAIL**—Various sports. *Paramount.*

ZION CANYON IN COLOR (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Junior.*

CARTOONS

POP GOES YOUR HEART—*Vitaphone.* Song cartoon in color.

ROBINSON CRUSOE ISLE (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal.*

TOYLAND PREMIERE—*Universal.* Pleasing Christmas musical color cartoon. *Junior.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS

BUM VOYAGE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly.

DON REDMAN—*Vitaphone.* Colored orchestra and a good song.

DUMB LUCK—*Educational, 2 rls.* Easy Aces in amusing farce.

GEM OF THE OCEAN, THE—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Good singing and dancing.

HARLEM HARMONY—*Educational.* Songs sung by colored children.

LIVE GHOST, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Laurel and Hardy.

MYSTERY MOUNTAIN, THE (Serial) NOS. 6-8—*Mascot, 2 rls. each.* Ken Maynard and his horse Tarzan. *Junior.*

REVUE A LA CARTE—*Universal, 2 rls.* Dancing and singing.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 3—*Columbia.*

WILL OSBORNE—*Vitaphone.* Good orchestra with novel effects.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

- National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
 - \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
 - \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups
- Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
 - \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine
- Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) . . . 25c
- Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) . free
- Special film lists each 10c
- Junior Matinee Films
- Foreign Films
- Educational Films
- Selected Book-Films
- Films on Subjects of Timely Interest
- Exceptional Photoplays
- Musical Films

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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February, 1935



Barkis, David and Peggotty in "David Copperfield" (see page 7)

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\$2.00 a year

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*BABOONA—Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson. Fox. What is called an Aerial Epic over Africa—fine photography, much of it from the air, and fine specimen of what the Johnsons call "game." Much like former Johnson films, better photographed. Family. Junior matinee.

BEHIND THE EVIDENCE—Norman Foster, Sheila Manners. Columbia. A rich playboy who loses his money and becomes a reporter, winning renown and a girl by unmasking an unsuspected criminal. Family.

BEST MAN WINS, THE—Jack Holt, Edmund Lowe. Columbia. Strong silent man, gay irresponsible man, rivals—with deep-sea diving as a background. Good melodrama, with a good deal of novelty. Family.

CARNIVAL—Lee Tracy, Sally Eilers, Jimmy Durante. Columbia. Against a lively circus background, a young man has an amusing and touching time bringing up his motherless child. The picture has a good deal of popular appeal. Family.

CHARLIE CHAN IN PARIS—Warner Oland, Eric Rhodes, Mary Brian. Fox. Charlie Chan solves a mystery connected with a Paris bank, in which the criminals provide an ingenious alibi. Warner Oland good as usual, assisted by a junior Chan. Family.

*CLIVE OF INDIA—Ronald Colman, Loretta Young, Colin Clive. United Artists. A colorful and moving life of the man who conquered India for England centering more on the character of the man than his military exploits. Excellently produced and splendidly acted it is a highly worth while historical picture from the viewpoint of England's idea of imperial destiny. Suggested for school and libraries. Family.

*DAVID COPPERFIELD — See Exceptional Photoplays Department. Family.

DON QUIXOTE—Feodor Chaliapin. From the novel by Miguel Cervantes. Valdemar Bell. The classic tale of the crack-brained knight of old Spain, magnificently photographed and with an unusual performance by the great Russian singer. Family.

*ENCHANTED APRIL—Ann Harding, Frank Morgan. From the novel by Elizabeth. RKO-Radio. Two neglected wives run off to Italy for a month, and romance blooms again. A trifle mad, mostly delightful and often hilarious. Family.

FLICKORNA FRAN GAMLA STA'N (The Girls from the Old Town)—Edvard Persson. From story by Ake Ohberg. Scandinavian. A comedy in Swedish, about two girls with different ideas about men, and how they came out. Beautifully acted, with delightful secondary characters. Family.

*GILDED LILY, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Department. Family.

IN OLD SANTA FE—Ken Maynard. Mascot. A lively, enjoyable Western, laid on a dude ranch, in which a cowboy unmasks the schemes of some slick Easterners. Family.

*HEI TIKI—Maori native cast. First Division. A legend of old Maori tribes in New Zealand, romantic and picturesque, re-enacted by natives. Aside from its interest as a story, excellent in itself the picture has superior value as a record of the primitive life of a particularly noble race. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available. Family.

*IRON DUKE, THE—George Arliss. Gaumont-British. George Arliss' interpretation of the character of the Duke of Wellington, in a handsome historical panorama of the events preceding and following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Suggested for schools and libraries. Family.

*LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER, THE—Gary Cooper, Franchot Tone, Sir Guy Standing, Richard Cromwell. Suggested by the book of Francis Yeats-Brown. Paramount. With nothing of the book left except the title this picture tells an exciting Kiplingesque story of three British subalterns in India in a native revolt, and the struggles of a colonel's son to live up to the military traditions of his father. It glorifies the old-time imperial spirit. Family.

MAYBE IT'S LOVE—Gloria Stewart, Ross Alexander. From play by Maxwell Anderson. First National. A pleasant comedy about a poor young man who gets married and finds that budgets, in-laws and a wealthy rival upset his happiness. Family.

(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The National Board Announces Its New Treasurer

DR. WILLIAM B. TOWER of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review was elected Treasurer of the Board at a recent meeting of the Committee. In this capacity he has taken over the office left vacant by the death of Dr. Myron T. Scudder, who had held the treasurership for the past twelve years.

The service which Dr. Tower has given to the Board has been particularly active and has extended over a long period. He became connected with the organization nearly twenty years ago and has served as a member of the Review Committee, the General and Membership Committees and for some time as Chairman of the latter.

The office of Chairman of the Board Dr. Tower most capably filled from 1923 to 1930. This made him ex-officio Chairman of the Better Films National Council and he has given freely of his time and interest

to the administrative, personnel and community program activities of the Board. With a background, therefore, developed through extended contact and intimate knowledge of the Board, together with ma-

major responsibilities in other fields of activity, he comes to this new position as Treasurer of the Board.

Dr. Tower was graduated from Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, in 1896 with the degree of A.B. In 1926, he was honored by the University with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. After entering the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he held pastorates for many years in New York City, until in 1918 he was called to the Directorship of the Department of Records, Research and Surveys of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Foreign Missions. Since 1926, he has been Secretary of the New York East Conference of his denomination.



Dr. William B. Tower

Dr. Tower in his attitude toward the motion picture, as member and officer of the National Board, as a broad churchman, who believes it to be the duty and privilege of the Church to be concerned with whatever does and should concern the public, and as a patron of this ever-growing art and entertainment, has always been sympathetic

with the freedom of individual judgment and favorable to the better films method of selection as opposed to legal censorship. He believes that an intelligent public in all age groups should be constructively interested in the motion picture for encouragement and guidance in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

Films -- A Source of Experience

By JOHN A. SEXSON, Superintendent of Pasadena City Schools

The question of children's attendance at motion pictures and the effect received therefrom as presented by Mr. Sexson is in agreement with our belief that this is each parent's problem and one concerning which he should keep himself informed. This is taken from an article appearing in a special motion picture number of the Los Angeles School Journal.

THERE is no dispute as to the potency of the film as a teaching agency. Compared to the results easily obtainable by its use those secured through current formal methods are clumsy and antiquated. By the use of films we not only teach more clearly but we teach more effectively and with a degree of vividness and reality that closely approaches experience. Granting that these results are to be obtained only in certain specific fields, it should be pointed out that these fields are largely those of conduct, character and behavior.

Films become a limitless source of experience, both absorbed and repeated in imitative play or active living. Shall we allow our children to go to the movies or shall we forbid? Shall we regulate? How often should they go? At what age should they go? Do they get superficial ideas about life or do undesirable things slip by them unnoticed? Do pictures of racketeers, robbers and murderers make children want to be such characters, or do these pictures warn them of dangers and show that undesirable behavior is to be avoided? Do the love scenes that are shown on the screen make them want to experiment? How may we get better movies? What should we think about censorship?

Throughout the length and breadth of the country such questions and many more are being asked. Schools often urge that children be limited as to the number of school nights they may go to "shows." In some families parents make rules about expenditure of money for movies. In others reviews of current offerings are scanned and selection made by the parents before permission is given. In others it is left to chance—to whatever is showing at the neighborhood theatre—to the recommendation of other children.

The practice in most families in making decisions about pictures is based on the opinion of parents, and much of the opinion of adults that determines the direction of action is uninformed opinion. Often it is guessing or suspecting. We no longer say "I think," but we hold untested and unverified opinions as if they were valid laws of action. There is no answer to the questions commonly asked about children and movies, which is valid for all children. The right answer for your child at any particular time depends upon many factors, such as: typical physical vitality; typical emotional balance; typical mental health; typical social adjustment; typical effect of experience at motion pictures upon sleep, work, play and behavior toward other members of the family and friends. Not only does the typical condition of a child need to be considered, but also immediate conditions, such as his present physical condition, his present need for rest,

or for excitement or for social experience.

The real problem with reference to motion pictures as with reference also to parties, chaperones, automobiles, liquor, crime and other phases of life is rarely thought about or mentioned. The real question is: How may we lead ourselves and our children to want that which ennobles feeling, clarifies thinking and calls out socially desirable acts?

A generation of adults, honestly concerned about discovering and providing right conditions for growth of children would find no serious difficulty in controlling the profits of degrading experience. So far the major portion of our protest has been verbal. Protest against undesirable experience for ourselves and our children must take the form of determined and intelligent provision for adequate entertainment; provision that takes into consideration all that has been found out about human needs, desires and impulses. The only effective thing parents can do about any of the vexing difficulties of an increasingly complex community life is to find effective ways of developing good taste, judgment and discrimination in themselves and each of their children.

Certain of our schools are giving courses in their English departments by means of which good taste and discernment may have a chance to grow. The children are learning through directed study to choose wisely; not withheld by force that merely breeds resistance. The children are being given an opportunity to distinguish for themselves between good filming and worthless, between plots that have real substance and those that are merely novel or exciting, characters that are true to life or those that are tawdry counterfeits and imitations. They are learning that commonness and vulgarity are poor substitutes for pictures of the art of living and add nothing to interest or excitement. But this opportunity to develop judgment, coming as it does in high school or junior high school, is late in childhood experience, and comes after much damage has been

done. A thorough-going education which begins at birth and is co-existent with life is the only means of social control that offers any real promise of successful results.

Specialized Theatres

IN spite of the ever-changing processes in motion picture production and distribution we cannot expect things to happen too fast and one thing to anticipate has been the specialized theatre. That it will some day be worked out to the mutual satisfaction of exhibitors and public there is little doubt.

An idea on the subject by Mr. Ben Schulberg, a leading motion picture writer and producer, was commented upon editorially in a recent issue of the Motion Picture Herald. This said in part as follows:

"Mr. Ben Schulberg, talking production the other day, anticipated two classes of theatres, one for strictly adult screen fare and another for family service. Classifications, gradually evolved, will go considerably beyond age groups, and rather, more importantly, into differentiations of social strata. Currently in some parts of the country the process is to be discovered making differentiations of appeal even within the policy of single theatres. For instance, in several Connecticut houses adjacent to the metropolitan area, Thursday programs are definitely attuned to the tastes of the house servant class, where Sunday nights offer as sophisticated and intelligent material as the art affords. Also all through the towns of the interior where farmers come to trade the theatres, which through the week have presented upper bracket material, break out in a rash of westerns and serials on Saturdays. The middle millions will always rule by buying power, but specialization in theatres and pictures will go on as long as there is an unserved class with enough money to pay for service. It would also seem inevitable that as the motion picture develops its capacity for specially addressing its product at special audiences production will be on much more assured ground, with perhaps narrower but much more certain profits."

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Chapayev

Based on material of D. A. Furmanov and A. N. Furmanov; directed by Sergei and Georgi Vasil'yev; photographed by Sigaleff and A. Ksenofontov; musical score by G. Popov; produced by Lenfilm, distributed by Amkino.

The cast

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Chapayev</i> | <i>Boris Babochkin</i> |
| <i>Furmanov</i> | <i>Boris Blinov</i> |
| <i>Anna</i> | <i>Barbara Miasnikov</i> |
| <i>Pyetka</i> | <i>Leonid Kmit</i> |
| <i>Colonel Borozdin</i> | <i>I. N. Pevtsov</i> |
| <i>Cossack</i> | <i>C. Shkurat</i> |
| <i>Elan</i> | <i>V. Volkov</i> |
| <i>Zhikhareff</i> | <i>Nikolai Simonov</i> |
| <i>Peasant</i> | <i>Boris Chirkov</i> |

ONCE more the Russians have taken a subject from the history of their Revolution and made a stirring picture of it. Its material comes from the memoirs of D. A. Furmanov (appearing as a character in the film, though represented by an actor) who went out as a Red Army commissar from headquarters to collect the scattered guerilla revolutionary fighters and bring them into more effective co-operation with the rest of the Red Army. Its chief figure is a carpenter's son, Chapayev, who had naturally developed into the leader of one of these guerilla bands---a man who has become one of the almost legendary heroes of the Revolution. The picture tells of the leadership of this man, his heroism and his humanness, and of his death.

There have been Russian films better written, better built, better directed and cut and better photographed than this, but none has come to these shores that is so human. Mass movements are sacrificed here---much of the crowd business and fighting is pretty ordinary---and

the whole attention given to showing what kind of men some of those simple fighters were, caught up by an idea they very incompletely understood but giving themselves to it utterly. The whole action gears itself to this picturing of character, which sometimes slows down almost to still-life, as when we see the men lying about in their barracks singing. But those quiet figures, and their song, tell something in the Russian character that words or action could not represent. One does not miss the sweep of an Eisenstein or Pudovkin.

Scattered about in the ragged army Chapayev is whipping into shape are many appealing people---the machine-gunner, for instance, and his girl, and the bearded old peasant who keeps asking "Are you a Bolshevik or a Communist?" They give a warm and solid background to the figure of their leader, who expects to be obeyed when they are fighting but likes to drink tea with his men when they are not. A fine and likeable fellow he is, so big he can live close enough to his men for them to know all his oddities and littlenesses and yet follow him devotedly. Not learned, something of a bluffer and a good deal of a swaggerer, a natural leader learning as he goes along, full of human feeling and courage. All these little close-ups of his intimate qualities somehow sum up into a far more heroic stature than that of most military figures at their business of fighting battles. This man is creating the spirit that has to be back of battles. And after all we remember him much more vividly as a man than as a soldier.

This film, with its humor and good nature and human simplicity, gives hope that the



Babochkin as Chapayev.

Russians are letting their great genius for revealing individual character emerge in their motion pictures. Certainly nothing they have sent us has showed so understandably what the masses of people were like who bore so much of the burden of the Revolution.—J. S. H.

Picture rated *Exceptional*.

David Copperfield

From the novel by Charles Dickens; adapted by Hugh Walpole; scenario by Howard Estabrook; directed by George Cukor; supervised by David O. Selznick; photographed by Oliver T. Marsh; musical score by Herbert Stothart; art director Cedric Gibbons; produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

David Copperfield.....Freddie Bartholomew
Mrs. Copperfield.....Frank Lawton
Elizabeth Allan

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Betsy Trotwood | Edna May Oliver |
| Peggotty | Jessie Ralph |
| Barkis | Herbert Mundin |
| Dan Peggotty | Lionel Barrymore |
| Ham Peggotty | John Buckler |
| Mrs. Gummidge | Una O'Connor |
| Mr. Murdstone | Basil Rathbone |
| Miss Murdstone | Violet Kemble Cooper |
| Mr. Micawber | W. C. Fields |
| Mrs. Micawber | Jean Cadell |
| Clickett | Elsa Lanchester |
| Mr. Dick | Lennox Pawle |
| Mr. Wickfield | Lewis Stone |
| Uriah Heap | Roland Young |
| Agnes | Madge Evans |
| Steerforth | Hugh Williams |
| Dora | Maureen O'Sullivan |
| The Vicar | Hugh Walpole |

GOOD intentions and imposing ambitions are plentiful enough in the making of movies, but woefully rare are the instances where technical excellence, good taste and judgment and an intelligent sense of the rightness of things combine to

bring those intentions and ambitions to a successful issue. *David Copperfield* is one of those rare and happy successes. It meets every reasonable expectation competently and generously, and it will be universally praised, even by those who find it—as some people do find Dickens—oversentimental, overlong, and often more than a bit tedious. For it is excellent Dickens.

Dickens, with his vast humanity and that amazing vitality of his which created a whole world of characters, contains inexhaustible riches for the screen, though his long rambling plots are the despair of scenario writers. His people—types, caricatures, or whatever you choose to call them—are distinct and individual in appearance, actions and speech, rare parts for good actors. The trick in getting him effectively on the screen is the enormously difficult one of selecting and condensing—keeping enough to satisfy the Dickens lover who complains bitterly when any favorite character or episode is left out, and building what is selected into a structure that will have the continually mounting interest necessary to hold the attention in such a long film as any comprehensive screening of Dickens has to be.

David Copperfield, in this version, is amazingly faithful to its original, rich in atmosphere and fine characterizations, and keeping a remarkable amount of the Dickens plot. Whatever can be said for or against it can be said with just as much fairness about the novel from which it came. David's boyhood is colorful, moving and dramatic, coming to a fine and satisfying culmination with Aunt Betsey's rescuing him from all his troubles. After that the story rambles, without any central plot thread that seriously concerns the hero except the mild question of when he will finally get settled with the right girl. The episode of Little Em'ly and Steerforth (and what a maudlin episode Dickens made of it!) comes in too sketchily to get any kind of grip on the sympathies—and incidentally provides the poorest thing in the film from a production standpoint, a highly unconvincing shipwreck dripping with all the signs of having been made in the studio tank. The unmasking of Uriah Heap is really a side issue with David, considering his platonic

indifference to Agnes, and we have had so little interest in the Wickfields aroused in us that we don't care vitally whether they were victimized or not. David's own career, which held us so strongly in his childhood, offers little more than a long wait for Dora to die and clear the way for Agnes, and the spectacle of a young man who doesn't know which girl he's in love with hasn't much serious dramatic fascination.

But the question of whether the plot is a strong dramatic one matters very little compared with the wealth of characters in the film who come breathing and full-blooded straight out of Dickens' pages. There's David himself, ideally played by both Freddie Bartholomew and Frank Lawton, who seem miraculously like the same person at different ages. If Frank Lawton appears less interesting, it's because his adventures are so mild compared with those of Freddie Bartholomew. W. C. Fields' whole career seems to have been a special training for this picture, and he steps forth finally as the complete incarnation of Micawber. Jean Cadell makes it a grievance that there is so little of her Mrs. Micawber. Edna May Oliver and Jessie Ralph give flawless pictures of Betsey Trotwood and Peggotty. The black villainy of the Murdstones is done in just the right spirit by Basil Rathbone and Violet Kemble Cooper, and Roland Young makes you actually feel the dampness of Uriah Heap's hands. There's a perfect little sketch of that tame lunatic of Aunt Betsey's, Mr. Dick, and there are delightful glimpses of Barkis, Mrs. Gummidge, and Clickett. The young girls are as dull as the usual heroine of Dickens, though far more robust than any Dickens seems to have imagined. It is hard to accept such healthy looking young women as Elizabeth Allan and Maureen O'Sullivan pining away in the vapoursy fashion of Victorian fiction.

The film is a splendid picture-book of the novel, made for Dickens lovers. If any of that vast army have fault to find with it they are not only unreasonable, but quite ignorant of the vast difficulties that were conquered in doing so good a job.—J. S. H.

Picture rated Honorable Mention.



Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray in the opening of "The Gilded Lily."

The Gilded Lily

Adapted by Claude Binyon from a story by Melville Baker and Jack Kirkland; directed by Wesley Ruggles; photographed by Victor Milner; produced and distributed by Paramount.

The cast

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Marilyn David | Claudette Colbert |
| Pete Dawes | Fred MacMurray |
| Charles Gray | Ray Milland |
| Lord Granville | C. Aubrey Smith |
| Nate | Luis Alberni |
| Eddie | Edward Craven |
| Hankerson | Donald Meek |
| Daisy | Grace Bradley |
| Otto Bushe | Ferdinand Munier |
| Maid | Michelette Burani |

Take *The Gilded Lily*. Its just romantic comedy, with an O. Henry sort of plot decorated with bits of gag business like eating popcorn on a park bench, and using the popcorn as a kind of sentimentally humorous refrain with overtones of "You're the One I Love." Its plot is a built affair, contrived by a plot-making writer instead of forcing itself inevitably out of certain characters in certain relationships. It concerns a girl who has notions about love and the ideal man, and a newspaper man who likes to eat popcorn and watch the world go by, and take off his shoes while he's watching. Another man, with all the ear-marks of being the ideal one, comes along, but certain accidents interfere, so that he and the girl appear to jilt each other in circumstances newsy enough to make the headlines. The newspaper man steps in, with his intemperate flair for publicity, and catapults her into international notoriety (which must be where the gilding of the lily comes in).

JUST what yard-stick is there to use in measuring the values of pictures that set out to do quite different things, but do them equally well? Is pleasure a matter of heights and depths, so that you can hitch some esthetic meter to it and find out just how completely and enduringly pleasurable it is?

The ideal one comes back into the picture, and then it becomes a question of which man will show the other up, and how.

Artificial enough, and superficial enough, yet within this contrived framework there's an unusual amount of humanness, as refreshing and heartening as if the whole thing were intended to do the public some great good instead of merely amusing it. The people act like people you'd like to know, and they talk as such people should talk, in an idiom that is close to our everyday understanding and at the same time an exact expression of themselves.

Altogether the whole thing is such a competent piece of work that it radiates a sort of brilliance, with its pleasant sentiment, its natural gaiety and its general effect of being just what it should be. Of course it gets a lot of help from the fine comedy gift of Claudette Colbert, and from a new man named Fred MacMurray who has a quality of human realness that gives you the feeling you could reach out and touch him, and actually find him there in the solid flesh.

What are you going to say about it except that it's very good? And if it's that, what else matters?—J. S. H.

Picture rated Honorable Mention.

Sequoia

Adapted from Vance Hoyt's novel "Malibu" by Ann Cunningham, Sam Armstrong and Carey Wilson; directed by Chester M. Franklin; photographed by Chester A. Lyons; musical score by Herbert Stothart; supervised by John W. Considine, Jr.; produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Malibu | a deer |
| Gato | a puma |
| Toni Martin | Jean Parker |
| Matthew Martin | Samuel S. Hinds |
| Bob Alden | Russell Hardie |
| Bergman | Paul Hurst |
| Joe | Ben Hall |
| Sang Soo | Willie Fung |
| Feng Soo | Harry Lowe, Jr. |

THERE have been numberless wild animal pictures in which the animals figured as "game" and "sport"—who, having seen them, can ever forget the works of the ineffable Johnsons?—but here is a picture that is different. The sportsmen turn out to be the villains, and the game specialist is ultimately hunted off a high

cliff by the animals in the most satisfying style of melodrama.

Essentially that is what this beautiful film sums up to, with many a lovely picture of the woods and their wild life by the way. It is built on the assumption that animals, however naturally hostile and bloodthirsty in their native wild state, may be taught to be friends and to forget what are supposed to be their natural instincts.

Specifically, a deer and a puma, left helpless and alone in their earliest infancy, are taken in by Jean Parker with the idea that she can rear them in perfect amity. Both her father and the young game warden, with their knowledge of wild animals, deride her optimism, but—well, there they are on the screen, growing up and eventually grown, and though the young puma sneaks out of nights to prey on other animals, you can see him over and over again in the friendliest relations with the deer, even after they have been turned loose again in the forest to go back to their natural way of living.

The animals must have been trained, and the picture is an extraordinary example of patience in the trainer and the director and cameraman. The grace and beauty of the wild creatures, moving as naturally through the woods as if there were no human being within miles, make as lovely a thing as a camera has ever caught.

As for the story, it is frank melodrama, with—behind its pictorial loveliness—faint echoes of Peter Rabbit. The human beings provide the villainy, and when the whirlwind finish comes, with the cruel Bergman stalking Malibu, the deer, and Gato the puma leaps to the rescue, it becomes exciting enough to satisfy even a serial fan.

The total effect of it is rather to stir up indignation against slaughtering wild animals in the name of sport than to convince anyone that pumas and deer can be—and ought to be—taught that it is much better to be comrades than deadly enemies. These two particular creatures make an interesting and exciting fable, but their friendship does not seem so much the thing to remember as that wild animals have a life of their own that is complete only when humans, whether friend or foe, keep strictly away from it.—J. S. H.

Picture rated Honorable Mention.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

The Council Set-Up in Tallahassee

ONE of the latest community motion picture organizations to become affiliated with the Better Films National Council of the National Board is the Tallahassee (Fla.) Better Films Council. This Council is carrying forward its program on a well worked out plan, in which it has been greatly assisted by the experienced advice of Mrs. James A. Craig, of the Jacksonville Better Films Council, who is one of the pioneers in this community work and a Florida representative of the National Board.

Its by-laws may contain helpful suggestion for other groups and they are quoted as follows:

Section I. Name—The name of the organization shall be the Tallahassee Better Films Council.

Section II. Purposes—The purposes of the Tallahassee Better Films Council are (1) To pursue the objectives of the Better Films National Council, and to carry out the programs of work suggested by the National Council to the extent that is possible and expedient. (2) To influence public opinion in Tallahassee by an educational program fostering better films. (3) To cooperate with the State and National Better Films Councils. (4) To continue to carry on the work begun by the association known as the "Better Films Committee," in cooperation with other local organizations, both those which have hitherto supported the association, and others interested in the Better Films Council.

Section III. Membership—Membership shall be open to both men and women. All present members shall be considered charter members. An applicant for membership must be recommended by at least one active member, and must receive a vote of three-fourths of the members present at the meeting in which his name is proposed, in

order to be admitted to membership. Any member who is unable to attend a meeting may send a proxy if an officer of the club is notified of the substitution. Members may join as individuals or as representatives of clubs. There will be no distinction in duties or privileges between these two classes of members.

Section IV. Dues—The annual dues of members shall be one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) per member, to be used as payment of national dues and to carry on local work.

Section V. Meetings—Regular meetings shall be held on the fourth Friday of each month. A meeting may be called by the president at his discretion.

Section VI. Elections—A nominating committee shall be appointed by the president at the March meeting each year. This committee shall make its report at the April meeting, and the officers shall be elected at that meeting. The officers for the succeeding year shall be installed at the May meeting.

Section VII. Officers and Committees—The officers of this Council shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer. These officers shall constitute an Executive Board, which shall have only advisory powers, except in cases of emergency. The president shall appoint standing committees immediately after being elected. These committees serve during the ensuing year. The following list is set up as a guide until changes seem advisable: Program, Membership, Publicity, Junior Matinees and Family Programs, Visual Education, Library Cooperation. The president shall appoint a monthly picture-reviewing committee. The duties of the members of the committee shall be to see all pictures presented during the month, to make written reports on blanks provided for the purpose, and to be ready to discuss the pictures reviewed, at meetings of the Council.

Section VIII. Quorum—Five members shall constitute a quorum.

Section IX. Amendments—These by-laws may be changed or added to by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at any regular meeting, provided that notice of any proposed change shall have been made at a previous regular meeting.

The Council has a membership of 34, mostly representative of cooperating organizations such as various schools, the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, churches, Woman's Club, Jewish Sisterhood, etc.

A weekly guide to selected motion pictures showing currently at the theatres is published in the local papers with the heading "Photoplay Guide, compiled by Tallahassee Better Films Council from information furnished by the Better Films National Council."

This Council receives the hearty cooperation of the schools. Mrs. W. P. Hollowell, the very active and interested secretary of the Council, writes in this connection, "Every Monday finds a copy of our Photoplay Guide, placed on poster paper with notations made as to the most suitable pictures for children, on the bulletin boards of the local schools. This, we feel, will teach the children to select the better pictures for their entertainment. Mr. F. S. Hartsfield, a new member, is county superintendent of schools. We have also the complete cooperation of our theatre managers. The January meeting was held in the assembly room of the Caroline Brevard School. The teachers were our special guests. We told them what we are doing and asked their cooperation. Wholeheartedly they pledged it. We have been invited to hold our February meeting with the Demonstration School and plans are to have the March meeting held as a picture demonstration in one of the local theatres."

This group has a splendid foundation and all indications of the interest and spirit to build from this a lasting program.

Twenty Years a-Doing

A community motion picture organization which has been in active existence for a long time and has accomplished much in that time is in Charlotte, N. C., as the following recently received report will show.

The Better Films Committee of Charlotte, N. C., has been in operation about twenty years, meeting regularly with an uninterrupted working system in complete harmony with the various theatre managers. A young newspaper man, Mr. Walter Spearman, is now acting as President. Under his direction the organization has representatives from every civic and patriotic group in the city. Good pictures and exceptional pictures are thus given deserved publicity and many a rather unknown film has been put over by that greatest advertising agency—word of mouth.

Visual education for the city schools is the goal toward which all effort and support is being directed. Funds are not yet available for this but in the meantime the theatres are helping with superb travelogues, and the committee is working out a definite plan to assist in a program of visual education. Dr. E. H. Garinger, of the schools is chairman of this activity.

A separate Committee manages the children's matinees each Saturday morning, giving a well balanced, appropriate program on which the children and mothers in Charlotte have learned to depend as both safe and enjoyable. A ten cent admission for the children is asked and, in spite of the fact that other theatres are open at the same hour with the same admission fee, four or five hundred come each week to the matinee sponsored by the Better Films Committee.

A representative is sent each year to the annual National Board of Review meeting, the President usually, and the Committee knows that this is a big help in planning and carrying out its work.

A Review Committee, working under the chairmanship of Mrs. W. L. Butt, sees all pictures shown in Charlotte and makes reports to local managers, to the National Board of Review and to Hollywood on audience reactions. A Better Films Guide is published in both the Charlotte News and Charlotte Observer every Sunday with all pictures for the week tagged as suitable for mature audience, family audience or junior matinee. Attention is called to exceptional photoplays through the newspapers, the review committee and announce-

ments. A weekly radio broadcast is sponsored every Saturday night from 8:20 to 8:30 o'clock with previews of coming pictures, their audience suitability and Hollywood news about coming attractions.

The Committee serves as a medium of movie contact for such organizations as the Little Theatre, the Junior League, Charity League, Woman's Club, ministerial associations, W. C. T. U., American Legion and auxiliary, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Writers Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, Civitan and Lions Clubs, D. A. R. and U. D. C., each of which has a representative on the committee.

The ten best pictures of 1934 shown in Charlotte were selected by the Committee at its January meeting. They were: *The House of Rothschild* and *One Night of Love*, tied for first place, *It Happened One Night*, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *We Live Again*, *The Little Minister*, *The Thin Man*, *What Every Woman Knows* and *Judge Priest*. Honorable mention was given to *Anne of Green Gables*, *As the Earth Turns*, *Catherine the Great*, *Little Man What Now*, *Treasure Island* and *White Parade*.

"The Children's Hour"

A children's hour of short motion picture subjects is sponsored by the Better Films Council of the Woman's Club of Rye, New York, at the Rye Playhouse the first Saturday of every month at 11 o'clock.

The latest program included *Marching With Science* (Adventures of a Newsreel Cameraman), *Mice in Council* (a Paul Terry Toon), *Monkey Shines* (Paramount Varieties), *Springboard Champions* (Grantland Rice Sportlight), *Noah's Ark* (Silly Symphony) and the second episode of the serial *Young Eagles*.

"The Children's Hour" of motion pictures is planned particularly for younger children. But parents and older children will find it entertaining and they are cordially invited by the sponsors. Admission is children 10 cents and adults 25 cents.

How to Judge

TWO pamphlets on the subject of judging motion pictures have come to our attention recently. The first entitled "How to Judge Motion Pictures and How to Organize a Photoplay Club" was written by Sarah MacLean Mullen, head of the English Department of Abraham Lincoln High School of Los Angeles, who is western representative of the Committee on Photoplay Appreciation of the National Council of Teachers of English.

Mrs. Mullen offers a surprisingly thorough treatment of the subject for such a small publication, running less than 60 pages, and has presented it in a most interesting manner. All the points of a completed photoplay are expertly considered, the theme, the story, the directing, acting, sound accompaniment, dialogue, make-up, settings and photography.

While the publication is directed to high school students and has been prepared and published especially for student members of the National Scholastic Photoplay Club it will be of interest to others doing motion picture review and looking for simple compact suggestions which will help them to really see and judge motion pictures. Copies can be secured for 25c from Scholastic Photoplay Club, 155 East 44th Street, New York City.

The other pamphlet, with the title "How to Select and Judge Motion Pictures" has been compiled and edited by Dr. Worth M. Tippy, Executive Secretary, Department of the Church and Social Service, Federal Council of Churches, who is a member of the General Committee of the National Board of Review. Dr. Tippy has read and studied much in connection with his interest and work with the motion picture and in this pamphlet offers with comment excerpts from a number of writers and from other source material. The purpose of this booklet, "to fill the need for a simple, inexpensive treatise on motion picture selection and appreciation," as stated by Dr. Tippy, has been fully accomplished.

Copies are available from the Federal Council of Churches, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City, at 25c.

Annual Conference of the National Board of Review

AS previously announced, the Eleventh Annual Conference of the Board will take place March 7th to 9th at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. An interesting and varied program will be offered and it is hoped that many of our field members and our other readers as well will be in attendance. There is no conference fee for the many sessions planned and tickets will be sent upon request. The only charge is for the Annual Luncheon to be held Saturday, March 9th.

The Year's Selected Pictures

IN 1915 the National Board began to stress picture selection as the most effective and satisfactory way to oppose censorship and began the publication at that time of the first annual listing of selected pictures, called a Garden of American Motion Pictures. Well, the garden has grown perennials, and renamed the Selected Pictures Catalog the publication has continued for a score of years. This bit of history precedes the announcement that the twentieth annual Selected Pictures Catalog is ready for distribution, and may be obtained from the office of the National Board, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, for 25 cents.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

MY HEART IS CALLING—Jan Kiepura, Marta Eggerth. Gaumont-British. A musical romance, concerned with how a stranded opera troupe landed an engagement at Monte Carlo. The last part is particularly novel and entertaining, and Jan Kiepura's grand opera voice is more than usually excellent. *Family*.

MYSTERY WOMAN—Mona Barrie, John Haliday, Gilbert Roland. Fox. Smooth melodrama, concerned with a woman's hunt for a paper that will clear her husband of guilt as a spy, for which he has been sent to Devil's Island. Expertly acted, which with clever writing makes it exciting. *Mature*.

***NIGHT IS YOUNG, THE**—Ramon Novarro, Evelyn Laye, Edward Everett Horton, Una

Merkel. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A romance of old Vienna into which pleasing tunes are deftly woven, telling a story similar in plot to "Old Heidelberg." It has gaiety, sentiment, humor and abundant charm, one of the pleasantest films of its kind. The direction is excellent. *Family*.

NUT FARM, THE—Wallace Ford, Florence Roberts. From play by John C. Brownell. Monogram. Very amusing comedy of a man who sells his business and takes his movie-struck wife to Hollywood—he wants to buy a nut farm but she persuades him to invest his money in a picture. *Family*.

RENDEZVOUS AT MIDNIGHT—Ralph Belamy, Valerie Hobson. From novel "The Silver Fox" by Gactano Saiza. Universal. A mystery story, in which a modiste and her exclusive creations provide important clues. A plot that holds the interest, with amusing incidental touches. *Family*.

RIGHT TO LIVE, THE—George Brent, Colin Clive, Josephine Hutchinson. From the novel "The Sacred Flame" by Somerset Maugham. Warner. A story of a young wife whose husband is suddenly crippled and an attractive brother-in-law who creates a triangle. The first part is talky rather than dramatic but on the whole things move on a high plane of virtue and honorableness. *Mature*.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MYSTERY, THE—Randolph Scott, Mrs. Leslie Carter. From the novel "Golden Dreams" by Zane Grey. Paramount. A pretty good mystery melodrama which keeps the interest and provides plenty of excitement. *Family*.

RUMBA—George Raft, Carole Lombard. Paramount. Dancing, comedy and drama combine to make an enjoyable picture. The story, laid first in Havana and then in New York, tells of a wealthy girl and her love for a cabaret dancer. *Mature*.

SOCIETY DOCTOR—Chester Morris, Virginia Bruce, Billie Burke. From the play "The Harbor" by Theodore Reeves. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Romance, comedy and melodrama, centering about the temptation offered a young surgeon by a rich widow to set up in a fashionable and lucrative practice. Agreeable actors enliven a somewhat synthetic tale. *Mature*.

SQUARE SHOOTER—Tim McCoy. Columbia. Good, competent Western, with a returned wanderer playing local Robin Hood against three rascals. *Family*.

TEXAS TERROR—John Wayne. Monogram. A good exciting Western in which a young sheriff believes he has killed his best friend in the pursuance of his duty and surrenders his badge but later is able to help the daughter of the man. *Family*. Junior matinee.

TOMBSTONE TERROR—Bob Steele. Steiner. An interesting Western about a man who returns to his home and finds that his twin brother is working with a gang of crooks and ruining his father's ranch. *Family*.

UNDER PRESSURE—Victor McLaglen, Edmund Lowe, Florence Rice. Fox. An exciting picture about two rival gangs of tunnel-diggers trying to beat each other in work on a tunnel under the East River. Vigorous and virile, with Lowe and McLaglen getting away from their Flag-Guirt kind of foolery. *Family*.

WALTZ TIME IN VIENNA—Renate Mueller, Willy Fritsch. Music by Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss. Ufa. Gaiety, movement and melody mark this musical comedy telling of the beginning of the popularity of the waltzes of the elder Strauss in the Vienna of 1840. The dialogue is in German but English titles help to explain the action; however, there is little need as music is the language of this film. *Family*.

WHITE COCKATOO, THE—Ricardo Cortez, Jean Muir. Warner. Mysterious happenings and tragedies in a lonely hotel on the French coast, centering around efforts to rob a young American girl of her inheritance. *Family*.

***WINGS IN THE DARK**—Myrna Loy, Cary Grant. Paramount. The lovely Myrna Loy plays a stunt flyer who hero-worships a daring aviator and, when he loses his eyesight, urges him on to perfecting his invention for blind flying. A fine combination of thrilling suspense, light comedy and poignant tenderness. *Family*.

WINNING TICKET, THE—Leo Carrillo, Louise Fazenda. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. An amusing domestic comedy about a barber who won in the Irish Sweepstakes. *Family*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

BURIED LOOT (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Done with unusual effectiveness.

CASTING FOR LUCK (Adventures of the Newsreel Cameraman Series)—Fox. Fishing all over the world. *Junior*.

***DANCE OF THE HOURS** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Well known selection from "La Gioconda" with scenic in color. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

EN DAG I DALOM (A Day in Dalecarlia, Sweden)—Scandinavian. Picturesque scenes.

FELINE ATHLETES (Sportlight Series)—Paramount. Trick performing lions, tigers, panthers, domestic cats. *Junior*.

***FINGAL'S CAVE** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Mendelssohn's grand music with a Robert Bruce scenic in color. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

***IN A MONASTERY GARDEN** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Ketelbey's music played against a beautiful background in color. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

***IRISH MELODY** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Lovely scenes of Ireland in color with accompanying Irish folk songs. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

***ITALIAN CAPRICE** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Tchaikovsky's music against a background of a colorful Italian festa. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

JUNGLE ANTICS (Paramount Varieties)—Paramount. Strange animals of South America. *Junior*.

KING OF THE EVERGLADES (Sportlight Series)—Paramount. Panther hunting. *Junior*.

***LIEBESTRAUM** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Liszt's well known song played against a soft moonlit

scene. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

***MEXICAN IDYL** (Musical Moods Series)—First Division. Peaceful scenes of the Mexican countryside in color with accompanying Mexican folk songs. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available.

NORRENS VENEDIG (The Venice of the North)—Scandinavian. Waterways of Stockholm.

***RAINBOW CANYONS** (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. America's western canyons in color. *Junior*.

STRANGER THAN FICTION NOS. 6-7—Universal.

SVENSKA JOURNALEN (Swedish Newsreel)—Scandinavian.

TRACKING THE EXPLORER (Adventures of the Newsreel Cameraman Series)—Fox. Admiral Byrd, Clyde Elliott, Father Hubbard and others. *Junior*.

TRIP THROUGH A STUDIO, A—Vitaphone. Showing how sound films are made.

ZEELAND, THE HIDDEN PARADISE (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Dutch countryside in color. *Junior*.

CARTOONS

BABES AT SEA (Color Rhapsody Cartoon)—Columbia. Baby meets the water babies. *Junior*.

BABY BE GOOD (Talkartoon)—Paramount. A Baby Boop is taught to be good. *Junior*.

BEWARE OF BARNACLE BILL (Popeye the Sailor)—Paramount. *Junior*.

BUDDY OF THE LEGION (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Junior*.

BUDDY THE DENTIST (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Junior*.

COUNTRY BOY (Merrie Melody)—Vitaphone. Little rabbit plays hooky. *Junior*.

DOGNAPPER, THE (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Junior*.

ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS, AN—Paramount. Jungle school in color. *Junior*.

FIRST SNOW, THE (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Junior*.

GOOFY GONDOLAS (Krazy Kat)—Columbia.

HEY HEY FEVER (Happy Harmony)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Mother Goose characters, in color, fighting the depression. *Junior*.

MR. AND MRS. IS THE NAME (Merrie Melody)—Vitaphone. Mermaid and her sweetheart. *Junior*.

SHOEMAKER AND THE ELVES, THE—Columbia. The familiar fable in color. *Junior*.

SUNSHINE MAKERS (Rainbow Parade)—RKO-Radio. The men of gloom transformed. *Junior*.

TORTOISE AND THE HARE, THE (Silly Symphony)—United Artists. Old fable in color. *Junior*.

WE AIM TO PLEASE (Popeye the Sailor)—Paramount. WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In color. *Junior*.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, NOVELTIES, SKITS, SERIALS

CHASES OF PIMPLE STREET, THE—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Charlie Chase comedy.

COO COO NEWS—Paramount. Stinging parody of the obviously ridiculous elements in newsreels.

DIZZY AND DAFFY—Vitaphone. Dean brothers in a baseball comedy. *Junior*.

DUMBBELL LETTERS NOS. 6-11—RKO-Radio.

HARRY VON TILZER—Vitaphone. Composer and his songs.

LITTLE BIG TOP, THE (Frolics of Youth Series)—Educational, 2 rls. Poodle Hanneford, the clown, helps the kids with their circus. *Junior*.

MAMA'S LITTLE PIRATE—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Our Gang and a treasure hunt.

MR. WIDGET—Educational, 2 rls. Joe Cook in typical nonsense.

MYSTERY MOUNTAIN (Serial)—NOS. 9-12—Mascot, 2 rls. each. Ken Maynard and his horse Tarzan disclose the identity of the villain. *Junior*.

ONE RUN ELMER—Educational, 2 rls. Buster Keaton in a funny ball game.

RETURN OF CHANDU, THE (Serial) NOS. 1-12—First Division, 2 rls. each. An exciting serial with Chandu saving a princess from a fanatical cult. *Junior*.

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 3—Paramount. Mabel Normand and old style melodrama.

SEE, SEE, SENORITA—Vitaphone, 2 rls. Singing and dancing, with a comedy plot.

STUFFY'S ERRAND OF MERCY—Vitaphone. Delightful picture of a toy dog in search of an orange for a sick child. *Junior*.

TWO BOOBS IN A BALLOON—Vitaphone. Edgar Bergen, the ventriloquist. *Junior*.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions

\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) . . . 25c

Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) . free

Special film lists each 10c

Junior Matinee Films

Foreign Films

Educational Films

Selected Book-Films

Films on Subjects of Timely Interest

Exceptional Photoplays

Musical Films

MAR 13 1935

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Intelligent People and the
Movies

—♦♦—
The Films in a New Field

—♦♦—
On Reviewing Films
for Newspapers

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AFTER OFFICE HOURS—Clark Gable, Constance Bennett, Stuart Erwin. Screen story by Laurence Stallings and Dale van Every. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Lively comedy-drama, with some detective work on the part of the hero. Interesting story with plenty of amusing episodes. *Mature.*

ALL THE KING'S HORSES—Carl Brisson, Mary Ellis. From play by Lawrence Claar and Max Giersberg. Directed by Frank Tuttle. Paramount. Highly amusing story about a king and a Hollywood star and what happens to them when they exchange places in the world. Gay and light with a clever ending. *Family.*

CAR 99—Fred MacMurray. Screen story by Karl Detzer. Directed by Charles Barton. Paramount. Story of the state police, showing the risks they take—exciting and entertaining. Probably a good picture for "Crime Prevention Week." *Family.*

COWBOY AND THE BANDIT—Rex Lease. Screen story by Jack Jevne. Directed by Al Herman. Stage and Screen. A widow and her small boy's fight to keep their ranch—not novel in plot but likeable and full of action. *Family.*

COWBOY HOLIDAY—Big Boy Williams. Screen story by "Roc" Hawkey. Directed by Bob Hill. Beacon. A cowboy on the familiar "bus man's holiday" cleverly ensnares the murderer who has been posing as a friend of his. *Junior matinee.*

FOLIES BERGERE—Maurice Chevalier, Merle Oberon. Musical, "The Red Cat" by Rudolph Lothar and Hans Adler. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. United Artists. Musical comedy with Chevalier in a double role, that of a variety actor and a wealthy banker. Ingenious plot

of mixed identities, and elaborate musical numbers. *Family.*

GIGOLETTE—Adrienne Ames, Ralph Bellamy. Screen story by Gordon Kahn. Directed by Charles Lamont. RKO-Radio. A smoothly and amusingly told tale about a wealthy girl losing her money and becoming a nightclub hostess. *Mature.*

GOLD DIGGERS OF 1935—Dick Powell, Gloria Stuart. Screen story by Robert Lord and Peter Milne. Directed by Busby Berkeley. First National. Some good music and good comedy in this picture about a gold digging manager of an expensive hotel and his gold digging staff. *Family.*

***GOOD FAIRY, THE**—Margaret Sullivan, Herbert Marshall, Frank Morgan. Play by Ferenc Molnar. Directed by William Wyler. Universal. A light and romantic story about a poor girl and her propensity for telling fairy stories and how romance and adventure came into her life as a result of one coming true. An excellent production. *Family.*

***LITTLE COLONEL, THE**—Shirley Temple, Lionel Barrymore. From novel by Annie Fellows Johnson. Directed by David Butler. Fox. The story of a peppery Kentucky colonel in the 70's and his equally peppery little grand-daughter. A warmly appealing picture, with the novelty of some entertaining dancing by Bill Robinson and Shirley Temple. *Family. Junior matinee.*

MURDER ON A HONEYMOON—Edna May Oliver, James Gleason. Novel "The Puzzle of the Pepper Tree" by Stuart Palmer. Directed by Lloyd Corrigan. RKO-Radio. This grand comedy team, again in their roles of school teacher and police inspector, solve another mystery. Entertaining combination of excitement and humor. *Family.*

MYSTERY MAN, THE—Robert Armstrong, Maxine Doyle. Screen story by Tale Finn. Directed by Raymond McCarey. Monogram. Fast moving and exciting yarn about a stranded newspaper man and a penniless girl who find themselves involved in a murder mystery. *Family.*

NORTHERN FRONTIER—Kermit Maynard. Story "Four Minutes Late" by James Oliver Curwood. Directed by Sam Newfeld. Ambassador. Good Canadian Mounted Police story about an officer sent on the trail of a gang of counterfeiters with whom the girl he loves has some mysterious connection. *Family. Junior matinee.*

ONE MORE SPRING—Janet Gaynor, Warner Baxter. Novel by Robert Nathan. Directed by Henry King. Fox. Comedy of jobless people living in the park in winter, highly original in its humor, sprinkled with a refreshing brand of fantasy. *Family.*

(Continued on page 11)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Intelligent People and the Movies



WITH the world apparently spinning faster and getting smaller every year, more and more problems stir more and more people to thinking about things. The days when one could drift comfortably along in a carefree faith that things were bound to go all right and needn't be bothered about—those serene days are not with us this year: conflicting currents are rushing too swiftly and roughly to leave anyone but dreamers with the illusion that they can glide along with no thought of where they are being carried.

Thinking—real thinking—is strenuous mental exercise, which ought to beget intelligence, and the combined serious thought of many people ought to create a definite stream of intelligent public opinion.

The movies grow no less important with the years—or do they? In this era of quick mechanical growth they can surely no longer be called an infant: they must have reached at least the age of adolescence. How far off is their maturity? As a combination

of picture and sound projected upon a screen in a theatre they have attained physical proportions to which time and further inventiveness would seem likely to add little of essential importance. The movies are big enough to take their place in a world of grown-ups. But what of their mind and soul? A man may be a giant physically, and at the same time an idiot or a monster. What are the movies?

The general topic running through all the sessions of this year's Conference is "Intelligent People and the Movies." The hope is that out of these sessions may emerge a definite concept of what thoughtful people, bringing all their intelligence to bear on the subject, in this year 1935, may look for in the further growth of this husky adolescent, the movies. Is its mind beginning to grow, and in what direction? Can it be guided and trained, or is it doomed to incurable immaturity? Has it a soul, or is it a Frankenstein monster, powerful but with no controlling spirit? Can it be given a soul?

ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES
March 7th to 9th
Hotel Pennsylvania - New York City

The Films in a New Field

By DR. HOWARD M. LESOURD

Lecture delivered at the Motion Picture Course, given at New York University under the Auspices of the School of Education and the National Board of Review

Dr. LeSourd as Dean of Boston University Graduate School has been very much interested in the use of films in character education and has carried this interest into a program of activity as chairman of a Committee on Social Values in Motion Pictures. Other members of this Committee are Dr. Mark A. May, Executive Director of the Institute of Human Relations of Yale University, who is also president of the New Haven Better Films Committee; Dr. Florence Hale, Editor "The Grade Teacher" and former President of the National Education Association; Dr. Phyllis Blanchard, Psychologist, Child Welfare Clinic, Philadelphia. This lecture given at New York University seemed to be of such general interest to Better Films Council members that we secured permission from Dr. LeSourd and Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher, Director of the course, to publish excerpts from it here.

EVER since motion pictures began their flickering portrayals of life and scenes upon the screen, many leaders have felt that they could be used for educational and religious purposes and a large sum of money has been spent through the years in experimentation. We have witnessed great progress in the field of education, for there are available now literally thousands of films that are serving as means of instruction. The development in the field of character education has, however, not been so rapid—experiments have been made, millions of dollars have been spent but the results have been disappointing.

When in 1929 the industry called a public relations conference in New York, there was discussion not only of the use of motion pictures for entertainment and educational purposes, but also of their use in character and religious education. A committee was appointed to make an investigation of the use of motion pictures in these fields. That Committee spent a year in surveying the whole country, finding out what organizations were using motion pictures, how they were using them and what pictures served their purposes to the best advantage. At the conclusion of the year's study a report was made.

There is little interest today in the details of that report but one recommendation was very important—that definite efforts be made to develop motion pictures for use in the fields of religious and character education. Because the depression had already begun and the whole industry was changing over from silent to sound pictures, progress was unavoidably slow.

In one of our studies we asked experts throughout the country to indicate what type of picture they felt would be most effective in character education. The general judgment of this group was overwhelmingly in favor of "life situation" pictures—those that would present problems realistically, and then end before solutions were offered in order that group discussions might be inspired.

In the effort to secure such pictures we faced two rather serious problems: first, pictures made up for character education purposes were so obviously an effort to improve the audience that unfavorable reactions inevitably resulted; consequently, we of the Committee realized that if pictures were to be effective conditioners of conduct, they couldn't preach and the audience should be led to discover for themselves the moral in the situation portrayed. Second, the pictures we desired must compare favorably to those shown in theatres, which meant that each one reel picture would probably cost from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Such financial outlay seemed an insurmountable obstacle.

As we faced these two difficulties a happy thought came to us. Why not find these problems in regular entertainment motion pictures? They deal with situations which are closely related to the lives of many people. So we began studying pictures from that point of view, and became convinced that we could make cuts from many pictures that would set problems for discussion. Then



A scene between the German father and the French youth in "Broken Lullaby" from which excerpts are used in the character education series of films.

we asked for some of these pictures from the producing companies. We worked for two years before we were finally able to secure the first print—it was *Alias the Doctor*. Later we were given *Young America* and *Tom Brown of Culver*. The cutting of these three pictures constituted our first efforts in developing our present program. These were shown to a number of educators and religious leaders, whose enthusiasm over the possibilities encouraged us to continue.

The film excerpts which are now available are *Huckleberry Finn*—the main objective of which is to cultivate a spirit of social democracy, and to substitute it for social and intellectual snobbishness in the relationships of youth. *Broken Lullaby* stimulates thought about the abolition of war, the responsibility of the church in promoting peace, and of the method of breaking down racial prejudices engendered by international conflict. *Sign of the Cross* develops appre-

ciation of those whose sacrifices made possible the Christian Church. *Cradle Song* helps parents to overcome a selfish love of their children which dwarfs the personalities of growing boys and girls. *Skippy*, when used with children, develops an understanding of the meaning of friendship and inspires a willingness to express it in constant helpfulness. This same picture can be used to teach parents the necessity of understanding their children. *Sooky* certainly shows the shallowness of snobbery among boys. *Tom Sawyer* raises the question of why boys dislike work about their own homes.

We call these pictures *Secrets of Success*, although no one seems enthusiastic about the name. Youngsters like secrets; they are interested in success. We did not wish to suggest to groups seeing the pictures any effort to improve them.

There are several points which seem important in a consideration of the advantages of this program. It represents

a new approach to an age-old problem, and the very novelty has an appeal. It is educationally sound because individuals by this particular technique are being taught to adapt themselves to a changing world of ideas and standards. The procedure is not static but dynamic. Through it pupils can be given a basic understanding of life and its relations, and of the values which should determine important decisions. By presenting real life situations the abstractions which frequently invalidate character education efforts are avoided.

A teacher's manual has been prepared which sets forth briefly a history of the development of this program along with the educational theory which underlies it. Teachers before presenting these films should read this manual and study the discussion outlines, which give suggestions to teachers as to how these pictures can be used with various age groups. We recognize, however, that each lesson outline must be adapted to the group with which it is used.

Three problems in the use of these pictures have been encountered: first, the training of children and young people to participate in a socialized recitation involving a more or less widespread change in educational procedure. Pupils in a large percentage of the schools of the country are taught to listen and to answer questions but not to think. We are trying to teach individuals through this particular method how to think and to arrive at their own conclusions, and how to express themselves and their own ideas intelligently and clearly. Thus to attempt to reconstruct educational procedures may seem presumptuous but nevertheless this program will help to do that very thing. Second, it involves the training of teachers, for a socialized recitation and discussion is a new technique with which too many of them are unfamiliar. Third,—and this is the most practical difficulty—schools, churches, and social agencies are not equipped to use 35 mm. sound pictures. Until this equipment problem is solved, the use of this program will be limited.

These pictures have been shown already to thousands of children, young people and adults. Their response and the response of intelligent and far-sighted leaders guarantees further development of this program which now seems to have such great possibilities.

The Screen and Opera

THE future of the stage play considering the notable advancement of the motion picture into this field, since the development of sound, is the cause of much comment by students of both arts, not so much, however, has been said about the opera and the films, but with sound recording improving all the time, music, as well as dialogue, can be most satisfactorily presented and thus opera too may come from the screen. A thought on this subject expressed by Feodor Chaliapin, the famous operatic star who has appeared in the recently released *Don Quixote* is worthy of special note. He has said, "The means at the disposal of opera pale into insignificance beside the tremendous perspectives of the talking film. . . . The future belongs to the talking film, and I think it will be the inheritor of the opera. . . . It is the herald of dawn for a new form of musical dramatic art."

Against Curiosity

PEOPLE who allow their curiosity concerning the secrets of motion picture making to spoil their enjoyment of a film are like the man who never hears the music from a phonograph because he is listening to the scratch of the needle, according to Ernst Lubitsch, Paramount director. The business of a motion picture is to entertain. The really intelligent portion of an audience does not concern itself with questions as to how an effect is obtained. They are interested only in being held spellbound. What does it matter? The effect is real. If it isn't the man responsible is a bungler.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPlays

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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On Reviewing Films for Newspapers

By ANDRE SENNWALD

Motion Picture Critic of the New York Times

IT is the particular charm of the cinema that, being too infant to have accumulated a sum of academic criticism, it permits each film-goer to be his own critic. Far more is it true of the cinema than of the drama, I think, that the public regards the obiter dicta of the professional reviewers with healthy skepticism and ill-concealed contempt.

A variety of picturesque and not overly reverent epithets have been applied to me, for example, since I renounced my desk in the city room and became a film commentator. During the past five months I have been called an idiot and a scoundrel for some of the newsprint I have consumed in my well-intentioned efforts to tell the readers of *The Times* why I enjoyed certain photoplays and why I disliked others. Although I am reasonably innocent of interest in politics, I have been called a Fascist, a Communist, a Socialist and a tory. I have been called "the ace phrase-mongering straddler of the capitalist press." I have been called "the leading press agent for the Hollywood pants-pressers." Only the other day an indignant correspondent informed me that he planned to visit the offices of *The Times* and "make a very excellent attempt to smash your bloody nose."

When, on the occasion of the New

York premiere of the British photodrama *Power*, I ventured to suggest that some of the well-bred English gentlemen were not altogether successful in their efforts to pretend that they were down-trodden Jews of a middle-European ghetto, I was accused of being the focal point for a wholesale attack upon the Jewish race. On the other hand, I have been accused of employing a mongrelized pseudonym in order to conceal what appears to several of my correspondents to be an obvious Semitic strain. When I applauded the Laurence Stallings documentary film *The First World War*, the left-wingers affirmed that I had sold my soul to a decadent capitalist system. When I found much of interest in Vertof's form and theme as expressed in *Three Songs About Lenin*, I was attacked bitterly as a dangerous revolutionary who was attempting to undermine the newspaper with which I have the honor of being associated.

Now, since I happen to be a rather furiously ordinary human being both in by deportment and in my opinions, the inescapable conclusion which I must draw from all this is that the cinema is a subject of enormous fascination to a vast number of persons. Make me a bookkeeper or a grocery clerk, and I would not be worth a casual prod from

the most suspicious policeman in Christendom. But make me a motion picture reviewer, and at once my work becomes the subject of microscopic scrutiny from all sections of the populace.

Before some outraged cinematist grasps the torch flung high by Mr. Elmer Rice, it may be useful to compose a few random notes on the functions of film reviewing in the daily newspaper. To begin with, it is reasonably clear that the film reviewer's influence is not to be compared with the power of the stage critic. Unlike his theatrical colleague, he does not hold the fascinating and rather terrible power of life and death. Compared with the tremendous world-wide audience which the film reaches, the reviewer's power to influence the success or failure of a photoplay is meagre indeed. He may hurt the local exhibitor to some small extent, but he cannot affect the total destinies of a picture with the dreadful finality that a theatrical critic can kill a stage show.

Pictures which are praised on Broadway are quite likely to fail outside the metropolitan centres of the United States. The reverse is even more true. Films which draw the fire of the New York press frequently win widespread approval in the small towns, where the ultimate commercial fate of a picture is usually decided. There is another factor which limits the power of the cinema critic. Being a popular art, scaled down in price to meet the needs of a vast audience, the cinema is assured of a steady nation-wide clientele. Whatever the judgments of the reviewers, the producers will reach this important, fundamental and largely uncritical section of the populace week in and week out. For they are dealing in a basic commodity. The facile, paradisaic dreams which they manufacture in the studios are as necessary to the submerged starvelings of the world as drink is to the sufferer from delirium tremens.

So vaguely articulated is the film reviewer's function that it may be useful just now to examine it. With the higher criticism he has, or should have, little or no concern. Primarily he is a re-

porter, a newspaper man, a conveyor of information. Since he is the representative of the film-going public, his work, contrary to the feelings of most professional cinema workers, is addressed to that public and not to the persons who participated in the manufacture of the photoplay.

From the public point of view, he is a guide to the new films, although if he is a good reviewer he should advance a step further and illuminate as well as evaluate the worth-while picture for its potential audience. His usefulness is in direct proportion to his success in meeting the needs and tastes of that section of the public to which his newspaper addresses itself. This does not mean that he deliberately invents an artificial judgment which is contrary to his own emotional and critical response. It does mean that when he considers his own reaction to be based on peculiarly abnormal factors in himself, which go outside the boundaries of the ordinary prejudices to which all of us are heir, he should strive to be scrupulously honest with the photoplay which he is describing. Normally, though, if he is a good reviewer, if he is suitable to the audience to which he is addressing himself, his reactions will automatically approximate the reactions of, let us say, the upper thirty per cent of the reading public which his newspaper reaches.

The producer grievously confuses the reviewer's intentions when he demands highly technical dicta in newspaper film reviews. What he may reasonably seek in the newspaper columns is a clearly and intelligently stated expression of the reviewer's likes and dislikes, together with convincing reasons for his responses. Nor can the actor, the camera man, the director, the writer or the scenic designer ask for specialized criticism designed for their specific needs. But they, too, may look for the reactions of an intelligent film-goer, addressed to the intelligent film-going public.

For the reviewer is chiefly concerned with achievement, and only secondarily

(Continued on page 10)

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

A Parent-Teacher Theatre Program for the Pupils

THE Central Council of the Parent-Teacher Associations of Altoona, Pa., cooperated with the management of the Altoona Public Theatre Corporation in arranging last year a series of Saturday morning matinees, beginning February 10 and ending May 26th. These shows were chosen by the committee of the Central Council and the manager of the theatre with the General Manager of the Corporation.

The Central Council, made up of the presidents of the thirty-three Parent-Teacher Associations of the city and four members at large, was aided by the managers of the State Theatre and the Strand Theatre in the city. The regular admission price was charged. All publicity was handled through the schools except a few items which the papers consider news to the general public and printed for that reason. The local associations discussed the plan and the matinees at their regular meetings.

The principal of the Keith Junior High School, Mr. Carl E. Whipple, writes that the entire project was carried out with very little criticism while ordinarily, a community project of this type draws criticism as well as praise. Although the number attending the matinees has been small they have always been self-supporting, he reports.

The first approved motion picture program included *Daddy Long Legs*, *Mickey's Charity*, a Mickey McGuire comedy, *Around the Calendar*, a Grantland Rice Sportlight, *The Bully's End*, an Aesop Fable, *Holland Mosaics*, a travelogue and the *Paramount News*.

Announcement in the bulletin to the schools carried the following notice to teachers: "The Parent-Teacher Associations of our city have been dissatisfied with the opportunities given to our boys and girls to see movies. They recognize the great influence pictures are in the lives of the 'moviegoers.'

They know that many boys and girls are not permitted to attend movies because their parents are afraid to have them see the pictures shown. There has been no use to object unless something better can be suggested. Two possible courses were open to the Central Council. They might buy sound equipment for one of the school auditoriums and, if they were able to obtain the permission of the school board, show Saturday morning movies. They might be able to cooperate with the local theatres in a special showing on Saturdays and holidays. The first alternative was found to be unsatisfactory at the present time. The second is being tried."

A notice of equal importance carrying a subject which is a source of worry to many groups conducting special junior matinees, was attached to the second program. It read: "The opening show for school children was a decided success. The schools sold 500 tickets which were turned in for admission to the theatre. There were 250 poor children admitted on passes. Over 500 tickets were sold at the box office. All teachers will please emphasize the fact that the pupils must stay for one show only. Children entering near the end of the first show and the beginning of the second were unable to find seats. What is more important—since the Central Council Committee has gone to the trouble of choosing a suitable show, the boys and girls who stay for the picture featured in the afternoon have defeated the whole purpose by seeing objectionable movies as well as the good. Let us all stress the point of a child's leaving after he has seen a complete children's show. There has been some question about the tickets for the shows. Sell the 10c tickets to all pupils. The 10c tickets may be sold also for parents if the pupils ask for them. Give passes to children who are poor and unable to attend the shows otherwise.

Be sure to fill in the name of the pupil, the name of the school in the space marked 'Acc't' and sign your own name in the space marked 'Manager.' Please note that these passes are only to be used for charity cases and are good only for the children's special show. Please report each Monday to the Superintendent's office the number of tickets sold, the number on hand, and the number needed. Send the money collected with the report. Tickets may be purchased at the box office, but the schools receive no percent of such sales. 25% of the money collected is returned for use in the schools."

The February 17th program was *Tom Sawyer*, a Mickey Mouse cartoon, a travelogue, a Paramount Pictorial and an Amos and Andy cartoon *Wraslin' Match* and the 22nd, *Washington—the Man of the Hour* and carefully selected short subjects.

The bulletin announcing the first March program announced also the marked success of the plan as follows: "The trial of four motion picture programs for school children of our city was a success. The programs were excellent. The parents were pleased. The teachers cooperated nicely. The papers gave good support. The theatre managers are in favor of the plan. The Central Council of P. T. A.'s and its Committee have been so pleased with the plan that they have arranged to continue the shows. Hereafter, the programs will rotate in the following order: March 10 at the Strand, March 17, 24, 31 the Oympic, April 7 the State.

"Previous announcements have been very effective. The committee has decided to give a two hour program of short subjects this Saturday. These seem to be the most interesting to the children who have attended. Other cities have found this plan satisfactory." The March features were *Adorable*, *Little Orphan Annie* and *The Big Cage*.

By the middle of April this information regarding accomplishment was sent out: "Last Friday a 16mm classroom motion picture machine was bought from our share of the proceeds of the children's movies. It is for the special use of the grade school buildings and it may be obtained by calling

the Keith Junior High School. It is suggested that the grade school safety film might well be shown as soon as it can be arranged." By May the Central Council authorized the purchase of three reels of motion pictures from the proceeds of these children's shows. They were *The Adventures of Peter, Monkeys and Apes* and *Some Friendly Birds*.

The plan therefore provided not only suitable entertainment programs for the school children at the theatres but also made possible educational films programs in the classrooms.

Reforming the Public

THE Motion Picture Committee of the New Century Club of Cobleskill, New York, has formulated and put into operation a plan whereby a worthwhile selected list of better pictures and family pictures will be posted in the schools, public library and published in the local newspapers each week. The committee in making public this service stated its belief that if those interested in better pictures could be told about them far enough in advance to make arrangements to see them at the local theatre that there would be a better response to good pictures. The purpose of the committee is twofold. It will primarily afford a dependable guide to parents by which they may select entertainment for themselves and their children, and encourage the production of more pictures of the very best type by increasing attendance and voting box office approval of these pictures as they are shown.

On Reviewing Films

(Continued from page 8)

with intention or technique. If he is a competent reviewer, he fulfills his function by saving the time and money of the film-goers who consult him for the news of the cinema. In brief, he is responsible only to his newspaper and to his readers.

(Continued from page 2)

ROBERTA—Irene Dunne, Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers. Novel by Alice Duer Miller. Directed by William A. Seiter. RKO-Radio. Musical romance about an American football hero who inherits a modiste shop in Paris. Pleasant and tuneless with delightful dancing by Fred Astaire. *Family*.

*RUGGLES OF RED GAP—Charles Laughton, Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles. Novel by Harry Leon Wilson. Directed by Leo McCarey. Paramount. Highly amusing story with an excellent cast. A perfect English valet finds America interesting if different from his native land. *Family*.

*SCARLET PIMPERNEL, THE—Leslie Howard. Novel by Baroness Orczy. Directed by Harold Young. United Artists. A splendid romantic drama, of a gay and courageous young Englishman in the time of the French Revolution who rescues people from the guillotine. Plot, atmosphere, acting, all excellent, with excitement humor, and an interesting love story. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*.

SHOT IN THE DARK, A—Charles Starrett, Marion Schilling. Story "The Dartmouth Murders" by Clifford Orr. Directed by Charles Lamont. Chesterfield. Murder mystery at college—well sustained suspense. *Family*.

SWEET MUSIC—Rudy Vallee, Ann Dvorak. Screen story by Jerry Wald. Directed by Alfred E. Green. Warner. Entertaining musical with good music and plenty of comedy about a feud between a charming girl who is trying to break into musical comedy and the leader of an orchestra. *Family*.

SYMPHONY OF LIVING—Al Shean, Evelyn Brent. Screen story by Charles S. Belden. Directed by Frank Strayer. *Invincible*. Story of an old musician who finds his ambitions realized in his grandson after his own two children have nearly ruined his life. Nice sentiment, with plenty of humor, and a good deal of music. *Family*.

TRANSIENT LADY—Gene Raymond, Frances Drake, Henry Hull. Story by Octavus Roy Cohen. Directed by Edward Buzzell. Universal. Dramatic story of the trials and tribulations which befall a girl and a boy who open a skating rink in a small Southern town. *Family*.

WHEN A MAN'S A MAN—George O'Brien, Paul Kelly. Novel by Harold Bell Wright. Directed by Edward F. Cline. Fox. Agreeable Western with a rich young man who's lost his fortune, finding an object in life. *Family*.

WHILE THE PATIENT SLEPT—Aline MacMahon, Guy Kibbee. Novel by Mignon G. Eberhart. Directed by Ray Enright. First National. Murder in a mysterious old house, with a nurse helping the detective solve a crime. Humor mixed with melodrama. *Family*.

*WHOLE TOWN'S TALKING, THE—Edward G. Robinson. Story by W. R. Burnett. Directed

by John Ford. Columbia. Up-to-date gangster picture dealing with the troubles which befall a timid man because of his strange resemblance to a hunted killer. Acting of the star in the dual role is outstanding, and the film teems with good comedy situations, satirizing newspaper reporters and their reactions to a scoop. *Family*.

WOMAN IN RED, THE—Barbara Stanwyck, Gene Raymond. Story "North Shore" by Wallace Irwin. Directed by Robert Florey. First National. Entertaining story about a girl who defies her snobbish in-laws and risks her good name to clear a friend falsely accused of murder. *Mature*.

WOMEN MUST DRESS—Minna Gombell, Gavin Gordon, Hardie Albright. Screen story by Dorothy Reid and Edward Joseph. Directed by Reginald Barker. Monogram. Story of young middle-aged people, and the marital crisis that sometimes comes at that period when they begin to feel they have missed something important in life. Well acted, with bright dialogue and characterizations. *Mature*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

DIXIELAND (See America First Series)—Vitaphone. Historic spots in the South with old Southern melodies. Suggested for schools and libraries.

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 8—Paramount. Old Madeira; nine year old cellist, etc.

PHAROAH LAND (Vagabond Adventures Series)—RKO. The Easy Aces commenting on a trip to Egypt.

SAAR, THE (Vagabond Adventures Series)—RKO. Interesting and instructive.

SPORTING SOUNDS (Spotlight Series)—Paramount. Kind of game with audience guessing sports from recorded sounds. *Junior*.

TRAIL OF THE 49ERS, THE (See America First Series)—Vitaphone. Historic spots along the Santa Fe trail in Daniel Boone's time. Suggested for schools and libraries.

CARTOONS

BE KIND TO ANIMALS (Popeye the Sailor)—Paramount. Good for "Be Kind to Animals Week." *Junior*.

BULL FIGHT, THE (Terry Toon)—Educational.

FIREMAN SAVE MY CHILD (Terry Toon)—Educational.

JAPANESE LANTERNS (Rainbow Parade)—RKO. In color.

MICKEY'S MAN FRIDAY (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. *Junior*.

PARROTVILLE OLD FOLKS (Rainbow Parade)—RKO. In color. *Junior*.

TAKING THE BLAME (Betty Boop)—Paramount. Amusing cartoon for dog lovers.

*TWO GUN MICKEY (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. Cartoon Western. *Junior*.

TWO LITTLE LAMBS (Lucky Rabbit)—Universal. *Junior*.

BILLY HILL—Vitaphone. Composer sings his well-known songs.

FATHER KNOWS BEST—Universal, 2 reels. Reversal of the usual boy-pursuing-girl wooing procedure.

GOOFY MOVIES NO. 10—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

PHANTOM EMPIRE NOS. 1-10 (Serial)—Mascot, 2 reels each. Gene Autry, Frankie Darro, Betsy King Ross.

Thrilling adventure serial of a vast empire far beneath the surface of the earth—has action, music and lovely scenery. Well acted and directed. *Junior*.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 5—Columbia. Hollywood at work and play.

SHRIMPS FOR A DAY—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Our Gang. Novel in its incidents and amusing. *Junior*.

SONG WRITERS OF THE GAY NINETIES—Paramount. Dinner given for old-time song writers. *Family*.

SPIRIT OF 1976—RKO. Clever and amusing comedy in operetta style, of the results of an anti-work law.

TREASURE BLUES—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly deep-sea diving for treasure.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. X, No. 4



April, 1935



The Young Reviewers Club of the National Board after seeing "Dog of Flanders" with young Frankie Thomas, star of the picture (at the extreme right) guest of honor. (see page 13)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BEHIND THE GREEN LIGHTS—Norman Foster, Judith Allen. From novel by Cornelius W. Willense. Directed by Christy Cabanne. *Mascot*. Romance between a young detective and a young woman lawyer, tangled up interestingly in the problem of convicting a murderer. Holds the attention and has the novelty of not showing the police as a lot of duds. *Mature*.

CAPTAIN HURRICANE—James Barton, Helen Westley. From novel "The Taming of Zenas Henry" by Sara W. Bassett. Directed by John Robertson. *RKO-Radio*. Story of Cape Cod—the love of an old sea captain for a woman, and his long years of waiting before his dreams come true. The acting of both the stars is excellent and they are supported by a capable cast. *Family*.

CASINO MURDER CASE, THE—Paul Lukas. From novel by S. S. Van Dine. Directed by Edward Marin. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. A typical Philo Vance mystery, which means that the interest holds up well, with a clever solution. Paul Lukas is not the best Philo Vance the screen has exhibited, but the story makes the picture worth while for those who like mysteries. *Family*.

***DICTATOR, THE**—Clive Brook, Madeleine Carroll. Story by H. G. Lustig and M. Logan. Directed by Victor Saville. *Gaumont-British*. In order to take the power away from his mother, the young, weak King Christian of Denmark appoints a dictator. A picture well done, depicting the petty intrigues of the time—good acting and amusing episodes. *Mature*.

DOG OF FLANDERS—Frankie Thomas. From book by Ouida. Directed by Edward Sloman. *RKO-Radio*. A Flemish boy's ambitions to be an artist and the way he worked with his

grandfather and his dog before success came. A fine picture of its rather old-fashioned kind, like *Heidi* and *Little Women*. Beautifully done. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*. Junior matinee.

FLORENTINE DAGGER, THE—Donald Woods, Margaret Lindsey. Story by Ben Hecht. Directed by Robert Florey. *Warner*. Rather involved murder mystery in which a young actress and a playwright are both suspected of the crime. *Mature*.

GREAT HOTEL MURDER, THE—Victor McLaglen, Edmund Lowe. From novel by Vincent Starrett. Directed by Eugene Ford. *Fox*. Lively mystery story in which a clever novelist helps a fairly dumb house detective to a solution. The McLaglen-Lowe rivalry has a new and refreshing twist. *Family*.

HOLD 'EM YALE—Larry Crabbe, Patricia Ellis. Story by Damon Runyon. Directed by Sidney Lanfield. *Paramount*. An amusing comedy about a wealthy girl, her harassed father, five bad men and an unromantic youth. The girl's craze for men in uniforms gets her constantly into scrapes. *Family*.

IT HAPPENED IN NEW YORK—Gertrude Michael, Lyle Talbot, Heather Angel. Story by Ward Morehouse and Jean Dalrymple. Directed by Alan Crosland. *Universal*. Plenty of action in this amusing story about a temperamental screen star and a two-fisted taxi driver who become very much involved with a scheming publicity man and a band of crooks. *Family*.

LADDIE—John Beal, Gloria Stuart. From novel by Gene Stratton Porter. Directed by George Stevens. *RKO-Radio*. Rural romance in Indiana of the '70's. Little Sister active in straightening out the entanglements between a farmer's son and a snobbish Englishman's daughter. Sweet and pure, but not dull. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*.

LET'S LIVE TONIGHT—Tullio Carminati, Lilian Harvey. Screen story by Bradley King. Directed by Victor Schertzinger. *Columbia*. Romance of a debonair man of the world who takes love lightly and a charming girl who refuses to see his viewpoint. The locale is romantic Monte Carlo. Excellent acting and a most entertaining production. *Mature*.

LIFE BEGINS AT FORTY—Will Rogers. Screen story by Lamar Trotti suggested by Walter Pitkin's book. Directed by George Marshall. *Fox*. A rambling, homespun comedy, in which a small-town newspaper publisher routs the pompous town banker. Some very funny episodes. *Family*.

LILIOM—Charles Boyer, Madeline Ozeray. From play by Ferenc Molnar. Directed by Fritz Lang. *Fox*. Best screen version yet made of
(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The Yearly Conference

THE Eleventh Annual Motion Picture Conference of the National Board of Review began its three-day session on Thursday afternoon March 7th, at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City, after a morning spent with the Review Committee of the Board at the Warner Brothers projection room.

The general topic of the conference was "Intelligent People and the Movies." Under two separate headings this topic was discussed at the two afternoon sessions. With Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher, Associate Professor of Education at New York University, as presiding officer on Thursday afternoon, under the general heading of "What Are the Movies Up Against?" several speakers talked about the different factors that appear to keep motion pictures from complete independence and freedom of development. Rev. Orrin G. Cocks of Wellsboro, Pa., a former member of the Board's staff, welcomed the delegates, and then Howard S. Cullman, of the Roxy Theatre Corporation, spoke from the practical theatre man's point of view on "Popular Art and Profit," discussing those elements inherent in mass production and mass appeal that inevitably keep the motion picture from realizing or even trying to realize its full possibilities. "Legal Censorship" was discussed by Margaret G. Mayorga of the Long Island (N. Y.) Federation of Women's Clubs, and "Indirect Censorship"—the indirect control exercised by such organizations as the churches—by Dr. Worth M.

Tippy, of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. Dr. Francis D. Tyson of the University of Pittsburgh ended the afternoon's session by speaking of "Organized Minorities and the Masses."

On Thursday evening the delegates visited New York University where, with the co-operation of the National Board, Dr. Thrasher is conducting a course in Motion Pictures, and heard a lecture, illustrated with films, by Col. Roy W. Winton of the Amateur Cinema League on "Personal Motion Pictures."

Friday morning was devoted to a panel discussion on Community Motion Picture Activities, with Mrs. Marguerite E. Schwarzman, of the New Rochelle Children's Laboratories and Teachers College, Columbia University, presiding.

Friday afternoon the general topic of the conference came up for further discussion with Dr. Francis D. Tyson in the chair. "How Important Can the Movies Be?" in various aspects was considered, "In Increasing General Intelligence" by Mrs. Jessica G. Cosgrave of the Lenox and Finch Schools, "In Directing Public Opinion on Public Questions" by Dr. John A. Hollinger of the Pittsburgh Schools, and "In Advancing General Culture" under different headings: "The Motion Picture and the Museum" by John E. Abbott of the Museum of Modern Art, "Music as an Aid to the Development of Film Technique" by Professor Douglas Moore of the Department of Music at Columbia University, "The Motion Picture



*Some of the notables at the National Board's Twentieth Annual Luncheon.
(For a listing of guests present see below)*

Enters the Reference Library" by George Freedley of the New York Public Library, "The Reading Interests of Young People and the Motion Picture" by Mabel Williams of the New York Public Library and "The English Teacher's Interest in Movies" by Dr. William Lewin of the National Council of Teachers of English.

On Friday, evening, under the auspices of the Committee on Exceptional Photographs, Robert Flaherty's picture, *Man of Aran* was shown as an important example of film art, together with some notable short color films called *Musical Moods*.

Saturday morning was devoted to the subject "Youth and the Movies," a session held by the Young Reviewers' Club and many boys and girls from New York and nearby towns. As the first young people's gathering of this kind it was highly interesting and successful, and one of the outstanding

features of the conference in this respect.

The Saturday luncheon—the twentieth annual luncheon of the Board—was both entertaining and enlightening, with Mayor La Guardia of New York City, Rev. Thomas L. Harris of Philadelphia, Hon. Herbert Brownell, Assemblyman from New York and Dr. George W. Kirchwey among the principle speakers. Among the guests of honor were Helen Westley, Gladys Swarthout, Blanche Sweet, Irene Rich, Walter Connolly, Adele Ronson, George Bancroft, Rudy Vallee, Frank Chapman, Otto Harbach, Burt Gillett, Alexander Markey and Phillippe de Lacey. Mrs. Oliver Harriman was chairman of the Hostess Committee.

The addresses given at both Luncheon and Conference will be printed in the Magazine. Those of Mayor La Guardia and Rev. Harris appearing in following pages of this issue.

His Honor, the Mayor

Reporting the address delivered by the Honorable Fiorello H. La Guardia, Mayor of New York City, before the delegates gathered at the National Board's Annual Luncheon on March 9th.

IT is rather a novel experience to meet a group of people who do not want to stop somebody else from doing something else. I am unaccustomed to it, to tell you the truth.

This questioning of censorship is very splendid and I think I did belong or do belong to a great many organizations against censorship. I think I made a few speeches on the subject—most of them coming back to haunt me now that I have got something to say about the subject. You know it is the most comfortable thing in the world to be in a minority. I have been in one all my life.

I do not pretend to know a great deal about the subject. I was very much interested in what has been said here about free speech. This is strange but I get most of my protests and complaints on the subject from people who believe in free speech. To give you a specific illustration: A few months ago, during the late summer, there was quite a delegation down at City Hall to protest against interference with free speech on the part of the police, I think it was. The police had interfered with some meeting, some protest meeting, and they were down there to protest for free speech. As very often happens down at City Hall, the schedule was a little behind time and just as I was about to receive this delegation's protest for the protection of free speech, a parade came along welcoming home Evangeline Booth. So I went on the steps of City Hall, as is the custom, to extend the welcome to Miss Booth. My committee who was down there to protect free speech became rather irritated so they started to boo and holler and would not permit me to make my speech to Miss Booth.

I enjoy moving pictures. I think the best censorship moving pictures have is the censorship of the box office. I don't believe for one, although perhaps you do not agree with me, that anything unpleasant or undesirable

in any moving picture is there by accident. It just could not be. There are some features of moving pictures that I do not approve of at all. I don't believe that the purpose is carried out or the justification supplied if the villain the last second of the picture is shot or imprisoned, not if you give him a glorious life all during five or seven years. I do happen to know that such pictures have and do make an impression upon the childhood of our city.

In considering this moving picture proposition, it is not sufficient to consider the film alone. The appeal which I want to make, and we are confronted with this problem, is to have your organization, in considering the best method of getting the most out of motion pictures, to consider the film and the surroundings where the film is exhibited. I have been trying to meet a condition in this city. As you know, under the law of our state, children under sixteen unaccompanied by parent or guardian are not permitted in moving picture houses. What is the result? We are confronted with the condition where some theatres have decoys who come in and out bringing the children in; others permit the children to go in under no regulation or supervision after they are in, and we are meeting with considerable trouble.

Children will go to moving pictures, and a great deal can be derived from the right kind of moving pictures. And this is my suggestion: instead of having on the statute books a law that is not enforced and cannot be enforced which permits undesirable conditions to exist, why not meet the situation? I have been trying to obtain legislation which would permit theatres, having all the requirements of the Fire and Health Departments, to have hours after school for children, where they would be admitted, provided that a portion and section of the theatre is put apart exclusively for children. In that way it would be an easy matter to provide a matron for every section set aside for children and in that way parents could know that their children were properly protected while at the theatre, and could derive the

benefit of the advice of organizations such as yours as to the right kind of pictures for their children to see. That is a practical method, I think, of dealing with this subject.

To date, I have had very little, if any, encouragement for my plan. Like every novel change, naturally, it meets with resistance. I do believe, though, that if we can get organizations such as yours to give this matter some thought and study that we might obtain (and it always requires time) legislation to carry this purpose out.

As to the legislation of censorship, in my fourteen years in Congress I do not believe that with the exception of one or two occasions there was any real danger of any such matter being taken seriously. At one time I believe there were hearings held. It looked for awhile as if there was some pres-

sure demand back of the bill, but it soon died.

The screen offers, as the radio, great opportunity of communication. I do not take advantage of it very often because my little daughter says I do not screen well. Now if I could have Clark Gable appear and I do the talking! But the screen is always ready to present any message. When I tell you that during my time in Congress the screen presented some of my anti-prohibition messages in Iowa and Kansas, I tell you that is going some. So after all, I am not very much worried about censorship.

It is delightful to be here, this is as close as I ever got to a moving picture actress in all my life (referring to the stars at the guest table). It is nice to have you in New York City and I hope the time is not very distant when I may join again with you.

Freedom for the Organs of Public Opinion

By REV. THOMAS L. HARRIS

Rector, Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany, Philadelphia.

An address given by Rev. Harris at the recent Annual Luncheon of the National Board.

I don't know why it is, whether it is because I am Irish by birth and English by education and American by citizenship and more or less of a Protestant by religion, but I am always "agin" the government. I say that but with most insincere apologies to the head of the government of this city. (Turning to Mayor La Guardia who was also at the speaker's table). Because I am "agin" the government I particularly deplore any attempt on the part of political or quasi-political organizations to control the organs of public opinion.

I am not going to talk very much about the movies because the movies are just one of the various organs of public opinion. Let us name them: the radio, yes; the movies, yes; the press, the stage, the educational system, literature, and finally the pulpit. I have given them in diminishing order of

importance but I flatter myself that I have given them in increasing order of integrity.

These organs of public opinion are very much objects of envy in the minds of certain people. They desire to control them, partly in order that they may make a profit out of them, partly because if you can form and can control public opinion you have power. The pretense for control is often disguised under one of two heads. It is pretended that these organs of public opinion need censorship or control or regulation for moral reasons, or it is suggested that for political reasons they should be controlled. I noticed only yesterday that a film had been forbidden to be shown in England for political reasons. But the real reason is not a very great concern, I think, for the morals and spiritual welfare of the people. It is not, I think, as a rule for any high motives of patriotism or the desire to maintain the integrity of American civilization. The real reason why these forces of public opinion are objects of

desire is that there lies underneath a social and economic reason that makes possession of these instruments for the formation of public opinion very valuable indeed. The gentlemen who desire to control organs of public opinion fool the church vote by talking in terms of morals; they fool the other voters of which we may take the American Legion perhaps as a typical instance, by an appeal to patriotism as their reason for regulating and controlling these various organs of public opinion. But censorship, whether it be in the name of patriotism or in the name of pure morals, censorship is usually a smoke screen for maintaining the existing order which is so profitable to a handful of people.

Censorship as the tool of education is always a failure. It must be a failure. It can be nothing else. I am reminded of an English schoolmaster who edited the text of the plays of Aristophanes for use in English schools. Having some regard for the morality of sixth form boys he decided that there were certain passages in the plays of Aristophanes that were not fit for their young minds. But being a scholar he decided that it was not fair that the text of Aristophanes should be tampered with, so he saved the sixth form a great deal of trouble by putting all the obscene passages in an appendix.

That is what censorship does. It tells us where to go to look for dirt. And most of us, myself included, go. It simply separates and makes accessible and also attractive the very things that in our more pious and stupid moments we pretend are undesirable. I wonder how many college students would have waded through James Joyce's "Ulysses" if the censors had not been so kind as to tell them that it was worth looking into. I wonder how many of the average American public would have the slightest idea about Communism or Socialism if it wasn't for the courtesy of Mr. Fish and Mr. Hearst who have given an immense amount of valuable publicity free of charge by attempting to suppress them. You cannot really suppress or censor undesirable things without immediately making them attractive and immediately designating the place in which to look. But even if you could, even if by some miraculous change in police

methods it were possible to enforce any law whatsoever with anything like 100% success, even if censorship were efficient, the results would be essentially negative. You might remove a few undesirable plays. You might close one or two undesirable places. You might prevent the publication of one or two undesirable and rather tedious novels, but you would not produce one single good play or good movie or good book by any amount of censorship in the world. But I regret to say that we shall see increasingly a growth of censorship.

Let me go back to the country where I was born and brought up for the first twenty-one or twenty-two years of my life. Let us go over to England. Before the war, the freedom of speech in England was almost complete. It was almost complete for this reason, that the average Englishman and the powers that be that governed England were perfectly sure that the Union Jack floated gaily over the heavenly throne and that God spoke with an Oxford accent. They are no longer so sure. They are no longer so confident that the order of things with which they are familiar and which on the whole they approve, they are not at all sure that it is going to be maintained. They are, therefore, not nearly so ready as they once were in allowing people to say what they liked at Hyde Park and elsewhere. And you may have noticed that a very stringent law has recently been passed that makes it impossible in England to own, possess or to advocate any theory that can be construed by a couple of judges as inciting His Majesty's forces to violence. That means that a great number of books that I have read at one time or another technically lay me open to charge and possibly imprisonment. In other words, as confidence declines, so censorship inevitably grows. You cannot expect to have real easy freedom of speech in days of crisis and we had better make up our minds to it.

And the increase in censorship will not necessarily be open because the organs of public opinion are extremely expensive investments. It takes a lot of money, I believe, to make a movie. It takes a lot of money indeed to run a newspaper. It takes a considerable amount of money to maintain

a radio station. And it takes a great deal of money to maintain an educational system. And because it does, those institutions are exceedingly vulnerable to attack. They are exceedingly sensitive to the opinions and wishes of those who have the money to support them. And therefore they will not normally permit expressions of opinion that diverge at all widely from the opinions of those in control. It is not merely quixotic for a great newspaper or a great movie producer, it is not merely quixotic for people like that to buck the powers that be; it is virtually impossible. They cannot even very well escape from this indirect censorship that goes on all the time and they are certainly open immediately and obviously to any open assault on any open effort at censorship. It is the simplest matter in the world to take over a great newspaper office. It is the simplest matter in the world to take over a radio station. And then when you have got it the other fellow is not going to be allowed to use it. We have seen that sort of thing happen in other countries. We have seen it happen perhaps most recently of all in Germany, and nothing has been more striking than the complete inability of the major organs of public opinion to exist uncensored.

But we have had evidence that a small group of clergy and priests have succeeded in expressing and maintaining a certain freedom of speech and the reason for it is that a pulpit is a most inexpensive organ of public opinion.

It is, therefore, it seems to me, the duty of authors, preachers and talkers to keep public opinion healthy and strong. Let us see what the conditions for healthy public opinion really are. I think there are three factors.

First of all there must be something to say.

Secondly, there must be someone or other with the—can I use “guts”—to say it.

And thirdly, there must be the means to express it.

I will assume that in these days there is plenty to say, plenty of vital interest to the man in the street. There is no doubt about that. I assume, too, that men today are no more craven than they have been in the past and that some of them will dare to say what

is unpleasant and unwelcome and unprofitable. But what are the means at their disposal for saying it? It only costs, I believe (though I may be rapidly corrected by some of these ladies and gentlemen who are learned in the stage) a few thousands to risk a play. Am I wrong? It is a comparatively small sum of money. It is more than I have, but comparatively a small sum of money. (I said that rapidly because I was afraid somebody wanted to produce a play.)

And it would seem to me that one of the great, fundamental difficulties that we have in dealing with the movies is that it costs a very great deal of money to produce a movie. And I sometimes wonder whether groups like this wouldn't be well advised to consider practical means for putting on small movies directed toward comparatively limited audiences.

But certainly to put on a play costs you a few thousand dollars. It costs you only a few thousand dollars to run a periodical. I don't know how much it costs to run *The New Republic*, but nothing like what it costs to run *The Saturday Evening Post* or *The New York Times*. It only costs a few hundred dollars to write a book. And any time I would like to put up six, seven or eight hundred dollars any publisher will publish anything I say and be glad to get the six or seven hundred dollars for doing it.

And it costs practically nothing at all to speak. If you don't like what I am saying now, I am out to the tune of about \$6 or \$7, the round trip fare to Philadelphia.

I am very skeptical of any movement whatever for censorship of the great organs of public opinion. I am still more skeptical of the common liberal argument in favor of freedom of speech. It is unrealistic. We may want it but we are not going to have it unless we are willing to stand up for it individually and be brave enough to say what we think and then sit down. Let's not be afraid of hostility and criticism for our views. Let's be willing to take the chance of losing money and losing popularity by saying what we believe and what we hold to be true. In the long run those are the only terms under which a decent, healthy public opinion can possibly be formed in any country or at any time.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Minds O'erthrown

IT has become pretty safe to expect that Walter Wanger, when he makes a film, will go out of the beaten track for his material, and that the material he chooses will be the sort that is potentially related to important human or social problems. One can also expect that these films will have a handsome production, as expert as the best movie-making machinery can contrive, with a competent cast and a seasoned director. The worth of the ultimate result depends on the fundamental wisdom and conviction with which the material is handled.

Private Worlds goes into a hospital for the mentally ill for its story, and into the shadowy region of minds and souls out of harmony with the life about them, those inner worlds to which everyone withdraws sometimes and where what are called the insane live perpetually. Over the picture, just from its subject matter, broods excitingly the expectation, the fascinated fear, that tremendous and moving drama will emerge and sweep us into unaccustomed emotions of horror and pity. We may look, too—if we are very optimistic—for some illuminating solution to the troubles presented, some such “happy ending” as comes from seeing a mystery satisfactorily solved and evil forces put to rout.

Private Worlds, for all its inherent promise, does not provide that satisfaction. This

comes, at bottom, from the film's unwillingness or inability—comprehensible but unfortunate—to get down to fundamentals in a clear and clean-cut way. The bed-rock reason for a person's maladjustment to life may perhaps be summed up in a statement as simple as an axiom, but each individual case has too many subtle complications to be revealed sympathetically with any such simplicity. Every character of any importance at all in the picture—and there are several of them—is in some way out of key with life, but in not one case is there any sufficiently illuminating hint of “Why?” To proclaim theatrically to the heroine “You are living in a ghost world with a ghost lover” reveals less than nothing about the obscure subconscious forces controlling the heroine's emotions and actions. So with all the other characters: if any reason at all is provided for their behavior it is so oversimplified that it becomes almost as cryptic as an algebraic statement of a plus b , meaningless without a conception of what a and b stand for.

Of course it is asking the practically impossible to ask for a popular film to make plain, simply and comprehensively, the complicated problems of psychiatry. But it's not too much to ask a motion picture drama to be a motion picture drama, building itself up competently, with increasing tension and interest, into a culminating knot of complication and struggle that demands and receives a satisfying working out. The main thread

of *Private Worlds* appears to be a love-story laid in an insane asylum, where a woman doctor of remarkable competence is in danger of losing her position because the new director of the institution happens not to like women doctors. But the two fall in love, and for reasons adequate enough if they were only made understandable each resists the attraction of the other. Back of this main pattern is a weaving of sub-plots concerned with the director's sister, an unbalanced emotional creature who has killed a man, an assistant specialist and his child-like wife with a complicated relationship of their own, and some of the other hospital people—doctor, matron, patients. In the ample space of a novel all these elements can function and fuse into a satisfactory whole, comprehensible as well as comprehensive. But no mere series of picture illustrations can serve to translate such a novel to the screen. It needs to be thrown into the chemist's kettle and boiled and transfused till it can be poured out again, all the same materials but a new, different form. *Private Worlds* wasn't subjected to enough of the heat of the alchemist's fire—genius?—and it comes out of the kettle with too much left that is lumpy and unrelated. In other words, it is too half-baked. Even an ordinarily complacent audience may well feel that there is not enough nourishment in it, for all the pretty pink frosting of the final clinch.

These harsh impressions are more of a tribute than anything else to the picture. If it were not so praiseworthy, as an attempt, it would be a waste of time complaining that the result is not better. The film, most laudably, goes out of the beaten track, it deals with matter that a grown mind need not be ashamed to take seriously, it is acted by a cast for the most part extremely competent, and in the direction of Gregory La Cava—a director too seldom given a chance to show what he can do—it has at least one brilliant episode, a scene where an unusual use of sound reveals the unbalancing of a woman's mind with extraordinary effect. But the final judgment of a hopeful but critical mind must be the rueful statement: it is so worth while it's too bad it could not have been a whole lot better.—J. S. H.

His Own Worst Enemy

IT never does any harm to twist a melodramatic theme into comedy. *The Thin Man* proved it for detective thrillers, and since the vast success of that artful film no up-to-date screen mystery but tries, usually with obvious effort, to be gay as well as baffling. The experiment is now being made with the abhorred gangster—if he can be taken with a laugh perhaps he will be less nauseous. *The Whole Town's Talking* is the first notable example.

Two men of identical appearance are classic comic material: they could not well be anything else on the screen, where camera tricks can let the same actor play both parts, a fact which the spectator can never completely forget, thus making any really serious illusion impossible. The comedy of *The Whole Town's Talking* comes from a timid little "Milquetoast" of a clerk looking exactly the same as a notorious Public Enemy just escaped from prison. It's an excellent humorous idea, worked out with plenty of amusing complications and a lot of deft minor situations and characterizations. The only trouble is that there's a bit too much dynamite in the thing for a farce, and the dynamite is Edward G. Robinson. The one-time Little Caesar cannot be a gangster without being so terribly real that he shatters the comic atmosphere and spills into the film something much too sinister for farce. Mr. Robinson is such an effective character actor that he hurts his own picture, which if it could have stayed in one key would have been as delightful a comedy as anyone could want. It is vigorous live stuff, with its rich background of police and business and newspaperdom, enlivened by such expert caricature as that supplied by Etienne Girardot and Donald Meek. The authors fall down only on the tough job of providing a good comic solution. But even if they had miraculously succeeded in rounding out the thing with a harmonious finale, could Mr. Robinson have subdued his killer into tune with it? One rather doubts it.—J. S. H.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Short Subjects on Group Activities

“COMMUNITY Motion Picture Activity and Interest” was the general theme of the panel session of the National Board's recent Conference, and though the allotted time to each delegate reporting on her special topic was short—three minutes—many interesting ideas and thoughts were brought out and the discussion period after each speaker—two minutes—was a lively one.

Mrs. Marguerite Schwarzman, a member of the Executive Committee of the Board and Director of the Children's Laboratories in New Rochelle, N. Y., conducted the meeting. A tabloid-form report of some topics follows:

PROGRAMS FOR FORUMS AND OPEN MEETINGS:

Mrs. Charles T. Owens, Chairman, Philadelphia (Pa.) Motion Picture Forum: “We believe that forums are the answer to the mood of the people—they want to talk as well as listen to others talk. We usually have an average of 200 at a meeting and endeavor to make each one present feel that it is her meeting and she must do something. We use postal cards, letters, phone calls and any good kind of ballyhoo we can think of and try to have the main topic as sensational as possible. We have exhibitors, distributors, trade journal editors at our meetings as well as those interested in better films from a social viewpoint, and we do have the support and cooperation of the exhibitors—they feel we haven't tried to clean up but have advertised the good and brought attention to the best and helped in that manner.”

Mrs. Wm. H. Howard, Motion Picture Chairman, Port Chester (N. Y.) Woman's Club: “We are not a year old—the Motion Picture Committee of Port Chester—just a baby organization but we are healthily happy and the theatre managers say 100% perfect.

At the initial meeting we gathered together the interested people, interviewed a theatre manager and he kindly invited us to a preview. At the next meeting we called together representatives from all organizations in the town and we have been growing ever since. We have the finest cooperation of the exhibitors and the newspaper as well as the schools.”

SPECIAL FILM SHOWINGS:

Mrs. James A. Craig, Jacksonville (Fla.) Better Films Council: “Ten years ago we planned our first showing of a special film for a special group—the film was to be *Grass* but it didn't arrive. We were asked if we would take a new unreleased picture and we agreed—it was *The Vanishing American*. The audience was invited and afterwards a number of people came up and told us they had no idea such good pictures were made, so we proved that entertainment films could be good. At later meetings we showed *Grass* and *Potemkin*, *Abraham Lincoln*—then *Siegfried* and that was the end of invitational showings. We had had enough to show the people what we could do and we did not want to hurt the exhibitors with invitational showings. We have also arranged educational showings for the schools and a French film for the Cercle Francaise. So far all of our showings have been invitational but we do hope to have subscription showings in the future.”

PHOTOPLAY GUIDES AND NEWSPAPER COOPERATION:

Mrs. Frank Shutts, Motion Picture Chairman, Oneonta (N. Y.) Parent Education Association: “Seven years ago the mothers in our town of 1400 inhabitants decided there should be some supervision of the pictures their children saw. In a survey made of the pictures shown that year it came to light that there had been 17 selected pictures shown with 1 suitable for juniors. So the

Parent Education Council sought to develop a discriminating audience—naturally the theatre managers thought we were going to be nose-y and others interfered with talk of taking away their personal liberty. But in 1934 we reported 90% of the pictures shown had been selected ones and nothing has been done or said by the Council in a negative way. The Photoplay Guide has been in the papers since the time of the origin of this work. When I told the managers of our two theatres I was coming to the Conference one of them said to express his gratitude to the National Board for their work and the other said to tell you his patrons were getting tired of 'goody-goody' pictures."

Mrs. Gertrude Moore, President, Westwood (N. J.) Better Films Committee: "Cooperation in our town is splendid. Our Council is composed of representatives from 9 clubs so the opinion is pretty thorough. The papers have donated space to us for a great number of years, for our Photoplay Guide."

JUNIOR MATINEES:

Mrs. Piercy Chestney, President, Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee: "At our first children's matinee in 1923 there were 12 present, 3 years later there were 2500. The matinees have been continuous since then except for November, 1932, when a new manager decided they were not necessary and announced there would be no more—but after all the protests and front page editorials he was glad enough to start again. There has been a falling off of attendance lately because there have been so many more pictures the whole family could go see so we have tiny children's programs now—all short subjects, cartoons, etc. All of our programs have been thematic and we get all the publicity we want."

Mrs. Fred B. Ross, Chairman, Bergen County (N. J.) Better Films Committee: "We give the children something they are interested in—they want action, something funny, something to arouse their interest, not a stoggy picture we might enjoy. We do run serials, *Rustlers of Red Dog* had a great deal of instruction in it. Of course there was shooting in it but my boy doesn't get as excited over a serial as he does over

going to a party and eating too much ice cream. We also have singing at our meetings."

FAMILY PROGRAMS:

Mrs. F. B. Frear, President, Rutherford (N. J.) Better Films Committee: "Junior matinees did not go in Rutherford—the parents felt it a nuisance to have a matinee in the morning, they wanted instead a good family picture for the afternoon on Saturdays. The double feature at one time gave us trouble but now the manager gives us one family picture, then the lights go up and the children may leave. Of course, many of them don't but that's up to the parents."

THE CHURCH INTEREST IN COMMUNITY MOTION PICTURE ACTIVITY:

Mrs. James F. Loomam, Chairman, Motion Picture Bureau, International Federation of Catholic Alumnae: "Our Bureau has been in existence for 13 years, we now have 26 radio stations throughout the country broadcasting a weekly release of the better pictures. They are rated as excellent, good and very good. Pictures below this estimate are not placed on our list. We are on record as opposed to the black list because we feel this is the best way of publicizing bad pictures. From our organization in 1922 we have been definitely opposed to censorship except the censorship of public pressure."

Mrs. Jesse M. Bader, Motion Picture Committee, Federal Council of Churches: "We would be derelict if we did not have an interest in the community plan. There is no better way to carry out better films work than through the Better Films Councils. They should have representatives of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish and other groups. There should be a tactful chairman who could explain to theatre men that the council is out to help not reform. I agree with people who say we don't want goody-goody pictures—we want virile pictures. And we don't like mothers who park their children at theatres and leave them. We must do something about that."

Mrs. A. F. Burt, President of the St. Louis Motion Picture Council, and Chairman of Motion Pictures of the National Council of Federated Church Women

reported on the work of her organization: "We have 24 organization groups with a membership of 300,000, with 350 serving on committees. There was the greatest interest in the inauguration in the neighborhood houses of Friday night family programs. We have 72 houses working with us and 36,000 children attend the showings. The greatest problem is with the parents. In the state there are 350 theatres set aside for family programs."

MUNICIPAL AMUSEMENT SUPERVISION IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC OPINION:

Mr. Herbert L. McNary, Chief of Licensing Division of the City of Boston: "I must thank this kind chairman for introducing me by my correct title for perhaps the first time since I held the position. The office is broad and fraught with misunderstanding. Public opinion is the real censor in the U. S.—all opposition to Mae West means nothing unless the public says she is washed up. Public opinion dictates and public opinion is different in the North, East, South and West."

REVIEWING OR JUDGING FILMS:

Mrs. J. S. Wrigley, Hackensack (N. J.) Better Films Council, member of the National Board Review Committee: "The most important thing in selecting a picture is the entertainment value—mental enjoyment. A picture can be instructive and yet contain a high entertainment value. Theme or idea not restricted but the truest to life is best. The plot should be logical and coherent. The direction is one of the most important things—so much depends on the director—he has charge of everything. Good acting is always essential for a selected picture. As to classification—a picture with strictly juvenile appeal can be instructive but it must always be entertaining; a family picture must have qualities that every one in the family can enjoy; a mature picture has strictly adult characteristics."

SHORT SUBJECTS:

Mrs. Irma Williams, of the Trans-Lux Theatres, showing short subjects and newsreels, told of the part such subjects play in the motion picture program of today.

The Young Reviewers Enjoy "Dog of Flanders"

A recent meeting of the Young Reviewers of the National Board was somewhat of a gala occasion—the picture reviewed was RKO-Radio's *Dog of Flanders*—which was voted excellent entertainment, but an added pleasure was a surprise guest of honor, the star of the picture, Frankie Thomas who was unanimously voted a "regular fellow" which seems to be about the highest distinction a young man can attain.

Perhaps the most important point brought out in the discussion was that this picture was outstanding because it dealt with childhood and did not take the characters on into their grown-up days. As one boy of 12 said, "I think the picture is much better as it is—stopping where it does. I think it is much better having it so your imagination can carry it on for you—there are different ways you can imagine it. I don't like to always be told everything." Another thought it was "unusually good and entertaining for younger children because it is about the only picture I ever saw that was concerned entirely with young people themselves." The Young Reviewers approval of *Dog of Flanders* means much because it has been brought out in several discussions that children are usually "agin" child actors. They seem to feel that when they see actors they want the best and sometimes their contemporaries aren't the best. But Mr. Thomas they thought was so "realistic" and "what he did he acted like he really meant it."

After the picture had been thoroughly "gone over" Frankie came in and was introduced and after telling a little of the making of the picture he was besieged with questions which he answered most intelligently, amusingly and boyishly. Perhaps the most startling was asked by a misogynist of 12: "May I ask you a very personal question?" and when permission was given—"Did you really like acting with that girl and pretending you liked her?" Others were: "How did you get used to those shoes?" "Did it hurt when that old man threw you down?" "Will you please tell me how you made the tears come—were they honestly real?" "Was Peter such a snob of a boy actually?" "How

did they get the dog to do such intelligent things?" "Was the dog really going after the men?" "Did they really beat the dog with those whips?" and on and on.

Perhaps in closing it would be only fair to Frankie to say that his answer to the first question was, "Yes, sir, I really did—it was very pleasant. She is a fine little girl." P.H.

Why? A Peace Film

TWO apes, Andrew and Stephen, are neighbors in every sense of the word—one raising vegetables and the other poultry. Their life is one peaceful idyll until Mr. Fox comes along and starts strife in order to sell them his cannons. This is the plot for a fifteen minute cartoon which paves the way for an analogy of the late Senatorial Committee's findings regarding ammunition makers and the profits of war. The latter part of the picture is concerned with statistics and comparisons of the States before the World War and to date with the economic waste of the abnormal progress of nations convincingly displayed. While this little cartoon is provocative and does generate new interest in the problem of world peace the picture should be used primarily as an introduction to the subject.

All organizations interested in national economics and world peace through the reduction or abolition of armaments will find this picture a very able working tool. Produced by the Good Will Pictures, a non-profit organization, it is being distributed by the Motion Picture Bureau of the Y. M. C. A., 347 Madison Avenue, New York City, and may be had in 35mm film, sound or silent, and 16mm, silent.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

this famous European play about the love of a likeable young roughneck, with the mysticism somewhat simplified. A vivid production, excellently acted by Charles Boyer and the other principals. In French with English subtitles. *Mature.*

LILY OF KILLARNEY, THE—John Garrick, Gina Malo. From play "The Colleen Bawn" by Dion Boucicault. Directed by Maurice Elvey. *Ameranglo.* Irish romantic drama, in which the ancestral castle is saved by winning a horse race. Lovely Irish scenery, good Irish brogue

and characters and several fine Irish songs. Former title *The Bride of the Lake.* *Family.*

LIVING ON VELVET—Kay Francis, George Brent, Warren William. Story by Jerry Wald. Directed by Frank Borzage. *First National.* Story of a girl who knew what she wanted and got it in the face of opposition, and a man who lived aimlessly until he met the determined young lady. *Mature.*

LOVE IN BLOOM—Joe Morrison, Dixie Lee, Burns and Allen. Screen story by Frank Adams. Directed by Elliott Nugent. *Paramount.* Musical romance of a boy who is trying to make his way as a song-writer and a girl who has run away from a circus. *Family.*

MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, THE—Leslie Banks, Edna Best. Story by Charles Bennett and D. B. W. Lewis. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. *Gaumont-British.* Interesting story about a man whose young daughter was kidnapped and how he saved her. English locale with some good Swiss snow scenes. *Mature.*

McFADDEN'S FLATS—Betty Furness, Richard Cromwell. From play by Gus Hill. Directed by Ralph Murphy. *Paramount.* A father sends his daughter to a finishing school and finds it hard to keep up with her. *Family.*

MISSISSIPPI—Bing Crosby, W. C. Fields. From story by Booth Tarkington. Directed by Edward Sutherland. *Paramount.* Story of the old South in which a young man, jilted by his fiancée, joins a show boat. Although most of Crosby's singing is modern the entertainment is good and the Fields' comedy excellent. *Family.*

***NAUGHTY MARIETTA**—Nelson Eddy, Jeanette MacDonald, Frank Morgan. From operetta by Rida J. Young and Victor Herbert. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Musical story of a princess who runs away to the colony of Louisiana to escape a French court marriage. As well done as this type of old-fashioned operetta could be, with an excellent new romantic hero in Nelson Eddy. *Family.*

NIGHT AT THE RITZ, A—William Gargan, Patricia Ellis. Screen story by Albert Cohen McGann. *Warner.* An amusing and novel comedy, centering about press-agenting a chief into control of the Ritz cuisine. Bright and unusual. *Family.*

ONE NEW YORK NIGHT—Franchot Tone, Una Merkel. From play "Order Please" by Edmund Child. Directed by Jack Conway. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Entertaining, well produced, well acted mystery story which takes place in a hotel during an evening. The dialogue is witty and the two stars excellent. *Mature.*

OUTLAW RULE—Reb Russell. Screen story by E. B. Mann. Directed by Roy Luby. *Willis Kent.* A likeable Western star in a likeable picture, more like the actual West than is often found on the screen. *Family.* *Junior matinee.*

PRINCESS O'HARA—*Chester Morris, Jean Parker. Story by Damon Runyon. Directed by David Burton. Universal.* Love story of a cabman's daughter and a night club and race horse owner. Plenty of good comedy and an exciting horse race. *Family.*

***PRIVATE WORLDS**—*Claudette Colbert, Charles Boyer. From novel by Phyllis Bottome. Directed by Gregory La Cava. Paramount.* See Exceptional Photoplays, page 9.

REVENGE RIDER, THE—*Tim McCoy. Screen story by Ford Beebe. Directed by David Selman. Columbia.* Not an unusual plot—a man hunting for his brother's murderer—but done better than usual with plenty of tension and interest. *Family.*

\$10 RAISE—*Edward Everett Horton, Karen Morley. Story by Peter B. Kyne. Directed by George Marshall. Fox.* Amusing story of a clerk who plods along for years until one day he pays his boss back in his own coin. Edward Everett Horton is excellent as the much abused and shy clerk. *Family.*

TIMES SQUARE LADY—*Virginia Bruce. Screen story by Albert Cohen and Robert Shannon. Directed by George Seitz. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* An Iowa girl inherits a lot of New York rackets and comes to New York to manage them, and fight the racketeers who are out to double-cross her. Not very plausible but fast enough in action, with Nat Pendleton playing an amusing part. *Mature.*

TRAVELING SALESLADY—*Joan Blondell, William Gargan. Story by Frank H. Clark. Directed by Ray Enright. First National.* Highly amusing story of the competition between a high-powered saleslady and her rival sweetheart salesman, both trying to out-sell each other in their line—toothpaste. Plenty of comedy, clever dialogue and amusing situations. *Family.*

***VANESSA—HER LOVE STORY**—*Helen Hayes, Robert Montgomery. From novel "Vanessa" by Hugh Walpole. Directed by William K. Howard. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Two lovers in Victorian England, whom mistakes and ill luck kept apart for a while. Romantic background and romantic characters; a really moving love story, and good acting, with a particularly beautiful performance by Helen Hayes. *Mature.*

WEDDING NIGHT, THE—*Anna Sten, Gary Cooper. Screen story by Edwin Knopf. Directed by King Vidor. United Artists.* What happened when a Polish farm girl in Connecticut came into the life of a New York novelist. Tragic in outcome, but remarkably well done and not only interesting but true to life. *Mature.*

***WEST POINT OF THE AIR**—*Wallace Beery, Robert Young, James Gleason. Screen story by J. K. McGuinness and J. M. Saunders. Directed by Richard Rosson. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Another film to show how the army

makes men, in which Beery as a training sergeant has his troubles with an adopted son from West Point. Sentiment gets mixed up with duty, but there are some thrilling and amusing episodes, and one of Beery's likeable characterizations. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

AIR THRILLS—*Columbia.* Stunt fliers. *Junior.*
CHUMS—*Educational.* Friendships among animals. *Junior.*
GOING PLACES NO. 8—*Universal.* Hawaii with Lowell Thomas.

BLUE AND THE GRAY, THE (See America First Series)—*Vitaphone.* Battlefields and principal cities involved in the War Between the States. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Junior.*

NERVE CONTROL (Spotlight Series)—*Paramount.* Automobileist, snake and lion trainers. *Junior.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 9—*Paramount.* Marseilles; Bird City; musical show.

PATHE TOPICS NO. 3—*RKO-Radio.* Sigmund Spaeth; undersea; future cities.

STRANGER THAN FICTION NOS. 8-9—*Universal.* Strange things in many lands.

TOPNOTCHERS (Ace High Sports Series)—*RKO-Radio.* The tops in sports. *Junior.*

CARTOONS

***BAND CONCERT** (Mickey Mouse)—*United Artists.* Mickey's debut in color. *Junior.*

EO A GOOD DEED (Oswald)—*Universal.* The Boy Scout idea. *Junior.*

GOLDEN TOUCH, THE (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists.* Midas legend. *Junior.*

***HOT CHA MELODY, THE** (Krazy Kat)—*Columbia.* Schumann comes back to Tin Pan Alley to haunt the stealers of his tune—more originality than usual.

***LOST CHICK, THE**—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* In color—has real charm. *Junior.*

MAKE BELIEVE REVUE—*Columbia.* In color.

PLEASED TO MEET CHA (Popeye the Sailorman)—*Paramount.* *Junior.*

SONG OF THE BIRDS—*Paramount.* Color—adventures of a baby bird. *Junior.*

STOP THAT NOISE (Betty Boop)—*Paramount.* Country quiet vs. city noise. *Junior.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS, SERIALS

ANNIVERSARY TROUBLE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Our Gang. Spanky, as treasurer of the gang, has his troubles. *Junior.*

BARNEY RAPP AND HIS NEW ENGLANDERS—*Vitaphone.* Song and dance act.

CALL OF THE SAVAGE NOS. 1-2 (Serial)—*Universal, 2 rls. each.* Noah Beery, Jr. From Argosy story "Jan of the Jungle." Highly fanciful tale with good photography and lots of wild animals. *Junior.*

GUM SHOES—*Columbia, 2 rls.* Two dumb house detectives hunting for burglars.

HARK YE HARK—*Paramount.* Ben Bernie and all his lads.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT—*Vitaphone, 2 rls.* Hal LeRoy dances his way through an entertaining short.

MELODY MAGIC—*Paramount.* Johnny Green and an orchestra playing his hits.

MISSSES STOOGE, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Patsy Kelly and Thelma Todd aid a magician.

OBJECT NOT MATRIMONY—*Educational, 2 rls.* Ernest Truex. Complications arising from a man's accidentally getting into a matrimonial agency in his search for a cook.

OLD CAMP GROUND—*Educational.* Soldiers singing old sentimental war songs.

PHANTOM EMPIRE, THE, NOS. 11-12 (Serial)—*Mascot, 2 rls. each.* Mystery is solved. *Junior.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 6-7—*Columbia, 1 rl. each.* Hollywood stars.

SHORTY ON THE FARM—*Paramount.* Clever chimpanzee. *Junior.*

SING SISTER SING—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Patsy Kelly tries sharing an apartment with a selfish room-mate, Thelma Todd.

SOUTH SEASICKNESS—*RKO-Radio, 2 rls.* Edgar Kennedy nearly escapes his family for a sea voyage.

STRINGS AND STRAINS—*Paramount.* Singing and dancing and a clever puppet.

TIN MAN, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls.* Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly fall into the clutches of an insane woman-hater.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions

\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) . . . 25c

Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) . free

Special film lists each 10c

Junior Matinee Films

Foreign Films

Educational Films

Selected Book-Films

Films on Subjects of Timely Interest

Exceptional Photoplays

Musical Films

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Charles Boyer and Merle Oberon in "Thunder in the East" (page 9)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BREWSTER'S MILLIONS—Jack Buchanan, Lili Damita. From novel by George Barr McCutcheon. Directed by Thornton Freeland. United Artists, 7 reels. An English production of the long-popular amusing story of the young man who must be a spendthrift before he can inherit a large fortune. *Family.*

BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE—Karloff, Colin Clive, Elsa Lanchester. Screen story by William Hurlburt and John Balderston. Directed by James Whale. Universal, 8 reels. The tragic predicament of the monster, alone of his kind, seeking a friend and mate. Unlike most sequels, better than its forerunner, better done, with more meaning. Decidedly not for those who dislike the gruesome. *Mature.*

***CARDINAL RICHELIEU**—George Arliss. From play by Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Directed by Rowland V. Lee. United Artists, 7 reels. Colorful drama of the cardinal who was Louis XIII's minister of war, and his struggle to unite France against her foes within and without. The old play comes to life with surprising vividness, and Arliss is more a fine actor and less merely Arliss than usual. Both historically and dramatically interesting. Suggested for schools and libraries; worth being kept permanently available. *Family.*

CASE OF THE CURIOUS BRIDE, THE—Warren William, Margaret Lindsay. From novel by Erle S. Gardner. Directed by Michael Curtiz. First National, 7 reels. A merry murder story, humor mixed with thrills and a surprise outcome. *Mature.*

CHASING YESTERDAY—Anne Shirley, O. P. Heggie, Helen Westley. From novel "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard" by Anatole France. Directed by George Nichols, Jr

RKO-Radio, 9 reels. Story of an old man who, having missed romance in his life, adopts the orphaned daughter of his childhood sweetheart. Very well acted especially by Anne Shirley as the girl. Family.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE—Chick Chandler, Shirley Grey. Screen story by Tom Terris. Directed by Charles Lamont. Chesterfield, 7 reels. A young newspaperman finds himself in a serious situation when he tries to prove that circumstantial evidence is all wrong when it sends a man to his death. Interesting theme well done. *Mature.*

DINKY—Jackie Cooper. From a story by John Fante, Frank Fenton and Harry Sauber. Directed by D. Ross Lederman. Warner, 6 reels. Though a young lad's boyish hopes are shattered by an unjust accusation against his mother, his love for her and his faith in her goodness carry him through hard times. *Family. Junior matinee.*

EIGHT BELLS—Ralph Bellamy, Ann Sothorn, John Buckler. Screen story by Percy Mandley. Directed by R. William Neill. Columbia, 7 reels. Dramatic tale of taking a ship to China on a forced run, with rivalry between the captain and first mate and the owner's spoiled daughter complicating things. Much exciting action, and several good actors. *Family.*

FIGHTING SHADOWS—Tim McCoy. Screen story by Ford Beebe. Directed by David Selman. Columbia, 6 reels. A mountie out to get fur stealers. The usual kind, pretty well done. *Family.*

FOUR HOURS TO KILL—Richard Barthelmess. From play "Small Miracle" by Norman Krasna. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. Paramount, 8 reels. The dramatic happenings in the lounge and lobby of a theatre during an evening's performance. The acting of the star, as the criminal forced to kill four hours handcuffed to his guard while waiting for a train to Sing Sing, is excellent. The entire production is carefully dovetailed and holds the interest throughout. *Mature.*

GO INTO YOUR DANCE—Ruby Keeler, Al Jolson. Story by Bradford Ropes. Directed by Archie Mayo. First National, 9 reels. Entertaining musical with excellent dancing and catchy songs. Ruby Keeler as the little dancer who falls in love with a Broadway headliner down on his luck, does an excellent piece of acting. *Family.*

HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER, THE—Norman Foster, Charlotte Henry. From novel by Edward Eggleston. Directed by Lew D. Collins. Monogram, 7 reels. Picturesque story of ex-soldiers and land-grabbers in Indiana just after the Civil War. Interesting for its characters and old-time customs. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family. Junior matinee.*

(Continued on page 18)

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Our Chairman Talks of People and Pictures

At the annual luncheon of the National Board each year when Dr. George W. Kirchwey, our chairman, acts as toastmaster he insists upon limiting his duties to that of the introduction of speakers and guests, but each year the assemblage demands one of his characteristic talks and he graciously responds. Readers as well as auditors make up Dr. Kirchwey's large following and so we are pleased to present here his talk at the 1935 meeting.

I have been deeply moved by the appeal made here that the marvelous artistic resources of the motion picture should be more and more concentrated upon the development of a finer artistic expression of our modern life and that it shall not be left as it is today to the mercenaries who multiply motion pictures good and bad—many of them good—for profit. I wonder whether in this strangely confused human nature of ours, derived from two very different sources, we can hope for any very deliberate widespread movement of that kind and if we must not rely in this field, as we have in every other field of art, upon the inspiration of the genius who will not be held back. I think we are dealing here with a natural phenomenon of human nature that cannot be hurried and cannot be very greatly modified by individual effort. But if there is anywhere an organization which can contribute powerfully to that end, it must be the very organization under whose auspices these meetings have been held and which is more and more devoted to the motion picture as an educational agency and to education of the community, even of younger children, in motion picture values.

I don't think we need worry very much about the censor. Whether he appears in the guise of the State or whether he appears in the guise of Holy Church, he will play

his more or less futile role, an irritating role but not one which is calculated in the long run to mutilate the development of such an art as that of the motion picture with its appeal to beauty on the one hand and to a stronger, more courageous life on the other hand. And this last is what I would like to emphasize.

In the motion picture we have had a good deal of discussion during the last two years, shall I say over the possible baneful effect of motion pictures upon the child. And we have had some very good and sober-minded folk worry very seriously about the possibility of moral corruption. Well, those possibilities are about us on every hand and I don't believe that we shall ever create a world, not we, we fallible human beings—God didn't create a world in which evil was not possible. What we have is a world in which sympathy and cooperation and good teaching may well be in the ascendant and may well win the victory over the temptations to wrong doing and evil.

I would be inclined to say with regard to that aspect of our problem what I said about the production of artistic pictures. We shall probably never be able to eliminate the earthly from the spiritual entirely in our attitude toward the motion picture or with respect to anything else. The thing that we, I think, are justified in resisting is the imposition of artificial restraints whether by the State or whether by Holy Church that does not leave us the freedom which we need in order to work out our own salvation.

In a world where there is no possibility of going wrong nobody could get any credit for going right. Life must be a struggle if it is to be worth while at all. And there is one aspect of that problem that I want to refer to here. I have from another angle approached it on a previous occasion. You know that it is for my sins rather than for my virtues that I have spent some time in various prisons and in the course of it, like most men so situated, I became intensely interested in the life about me and the personalities with whom I found myself more or less intimately related. I discovered that pretty nearly all of our habitual, regular, professional criminal class is recruited during childhood. You would be amazed to know of the number who commenced their schooling in crime in some protectory (that is a nice name for it) or house of refuge (lovely words)—who commenced their schooling in crime at the age of five, six and seven years of age, literally, and who have made a continuous progress through those several grades of institutions until they finally graduated into Sing Sing Prison, which is a professional school of the highest grade. And when I have worked back to find the causes for this slump of children into delinquency, I invariably found that there was nothing about it excepting neglect and bad company and the constant repression of the natural, decent, wholesome influences of those children.

I, after studying multitudes of them statistically and otherwise, have reached definitely the conclusion that the delinquent child is to be differentiated from the good child in only one respect, that he can't put up with a dull life. He is not going to be a mute inglorious Milton if he can help it. He makes the most of the conditions which surround him for living a full and rapid and courageous existence. And if the only daring thing he can find to do is to upset an applecart and get around the corner before the police can reach him, who can wonder that he wears a crown of glory and he feels himself a bit of a hero? I don't know whether you girls have that feeling, but all of you boys will, I know, recognize it. In other words what they demand is something less tame than the petty round of the home

and the public school and perhaps I may add the too rigorously supervised playground.

You know there isn't anything in this scientific effort to differentiate the criminal from the good citizen, nothing whatsoever. We are constantly striving to find an explanation, something that will flatter our sense of superiority to the man in prison, let us say, but we have never gotten anywhere. Lombroso's criminal man, marked by his facial and other characteristics, was found to be just a little more common in Oxford and Cambridge than in Her Majesty's prisons in England. And when I first went to Sing Sing Prison I was hallucinated enough to set up a psychiatric clinic. I thought we were on the verge of making a discovery. Well, we had intelligence tests and all kinds of things and it was easy to demonstrate that the inhabitants of a prison were more feeble-minded than those who kept out, probably. At the same time when we came to apply the same mental tests to the community outside of the prison in our public schools and elsewhere, we found that if there was a difference at all it was in favor of the man in prison, on the matter of intelligence.

Then came psychoanalysis by way of my psychiatric clinic and demonstrated that the criminal is differentiated essentially and fundamentally from the moral, law-abiding citizen by the fact that he has a psychopathic personality. And I asked my psychiatrist what the symptoms of a psychopathic personality were. "Why," he said, "the mere fact they are recidivists; they have been here again and again." And I said, "That is an easy generalization. They are recidivists because they are psychopaths and they are psychopaths because they are recidivists." You see how logical the argument is.

Now in the University of California they are proving the inmates of San Quentin Prison are suffering from improper functioning of the endocrine glands. The endocrine glands are a little bit more mysterious than these other things. They will probably establish it. Somebody will be bright enough to measure the students in the University and the professors for that matter, and find that their endocrine glands are be-

having in very much the same way as are those of the inmates of the prison.

Speaking roughly of the great mass, I am convinced that there is no difference whatsoever, no fundamental difference, no physiological or psychological difference, no inherited difference, between the man in prison and the man who is going about his regular business outside of prison, between the good citizen and the naughty citizen—who has been deprived of his citizenship, by the way, by the decree of the court. There isn't any fundamental difference. The difference is solely in the circumstances which have attended the youthful development of the one and of the other. A decent home which isn't too tedious in its decency, children don't come from that kind of home to the protectory and the house of refuge and the reformatory. They don't. Somehow or other they keep out of prison.

What does the child need, this underprivileged child, this child of slum areas? Well, he needs something more, some newer incentive for living, something more inspiring, something more satisfying to an intrepid spirit than the drudgery of a half-baked home and the deadly routine of the average public school, or any school for that matter almost. He has got to have something to do. Really, I believe from the bottom of my heart that fundamentally the only thing that differentiated my men at Sing Sing from the students I left behind me in the Law School at Columbia, was that my boys at Sing Sing had a little more kick to them, a little more pep, a little more of the spirit of adventure, a little more daring, and they hadn't had any better means of satisfying that spirit of adventure than to snatch something from a fruit shop or something or other until they got into the habit of it and found out how much fun it was and how easy you could get away from the cop and get the better of him and beat the law.

Now have I gone very far from the motion picture? I am appealing for something that will add to our underprivileged, undernourished children, something of the element of romance, and some of the fighting spirit. And the moving picture has done that and is doing that in an amazing degree,

giving children something to talk about and something to quarrel about and something to think about. You know you don't have to be the hero yourself. If there is any heroism going on, if you have got a bit of imagination you can put yourself in the hero's place and live through all of his heroic experiences and you are a hero yourself for the time being. Why robbing an apple-cart, upsetting an apple-cart, even, and getting the policeman to chase you for three or four blocks isn't in it with the thrill that Tom Sawyer got out of some of his experiences and that I got out of reading some of Tom Sawyer's experiences.

The point is this: (it may seem a little far-fetched, but I am convinced that it is sound enough to be worth insisting upon until it has been further tested) that the pictures are almost the only outlet for the spirit of romance and adventure open to most of our city children. Boys in the country can still rob apple trees and do that sort of thing and occasionally chase and kill a snake, but what in the world in the way of snake-chasing and killing can a boy do in New York City for example? Even the Bronx has become too filled up to have any snakes or foxes or wolves or lions—a child wouldn't stick at a lion, you know.

I have dwelt enough on that. The point I am making is this: Be careful if you ever come to tame the motion picture that you don't render it as repulsive to children as school and home have become to most of them.

Plays on the Screen

“**B**UT it isn't at all like the play,” is oftentimes heard following the viewing of a film adapted from a play. A reason for this has been explained by Jessie L. Lasky, who speaks from long experience in picture making and adaptation. And in giving the explanation he has also given a good definition of a motion picture. There is a temptation, he says, in the screening of successful plays to adhere too closely to the technique of the theatre with the result

(Continued on page 19)

New York State Censorship Explained

By HON. HERBERT BROWNELL, JR.
Assemblyman, 10th District, New York City

The National Board is in theory and in practice opposed to censorship of motion pictures. When a hearing was held in the New York State capital in March, 1934 on the measure introduced by Assemblyman Herbert Brownell, Jr., for the repeal of the State censorship law, the Board went on record as supporting this both through personal representation and statements from many members and supporters of its program, including Bishop McConnell of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Chancellor Chase of New York University and Alfred E. Smith. Mr. Brownell is wholeheartedly interested in this legislation and he told of this interest at the National Board's Annual Conference in the address printed below.

IT must have been a great relief for those of you who came from outside of New York State to attend this conference to know that as soon as you crossed the State boundary line, you would no longer see any motion picture which would tend to corrupt your morals or incite you to crime. Since you have been here three days now, I presume you have forgotten all the bad habits learned in other States where your government does not censor films as ours does, and that I am speaking to an audience that has incorruptible morals and cannot be incited to crime.

My knowledge of the operation of motion picture censorship comes as a result of my brief experience as a member of the State Legislature. Before that I didn't even realize that there was a State censorship, and that a government official was daily saving my morals and turning me into a law abiding citizen. I doubt very much whether many New Yorkers realize the existence of a system of movie censorship in this State.

A brief review of its operation may therefore be in order. The censorship division is a part of our State education department. It is charged with the duty of examining all motion pictures which are to be shown in the state, except newsreels. There are three offices—at Albany, New York City and Buffalo. In the New York office there are two completely equipped projection rooms almost constantly in use. There are five professional censors—all of them women, and two additional men officials who are known as inspectors.

The law provides that the censors and inspectors shall be appointed by the Board of Regents of our State University upon recommendation of the Commissioner of Education. I understand the procedure is to have each picture reviewed by at least two reviewers. If there is controversial matter in the film, all five censors review it. They read the dialogue that is submitted with the application, separately as well as listening to it as it is spoken from the film.

In case it appears that a picture must be rejected, or that eliminations must be made, a letter is sent to the applicant setting forth the rejection and the reasons therefor, or setting forth the eliminations, as the case may be. In either event, the applicant may then request the Director to see the picture in person, after which it is the practice for the Director to hear the applicant or his representative or attorney on behalf of the picture. Following the hearing, the Director makes a formal decision which is forwarded to the applicant and from which an appeal lies to the Commissioner of Education. In the event such appeal is taken, either the Commissioner or one of his assistants views the picture, hears the arguments, and makes his decision. If the applicant is still dissatisfied, he has his remedy by certiorari in the courts.

What is the budget for the motion picture division? The director is paid \$7,500 per year. The five censors receive from \$2,250 to \$4,000. The two inspectors have a salary of \$2,100 apiece. All-in-all the budget of the department is approximately \$50,000 for salaries and \$15,000 for maintenance and operation.

The censors are supposed, under the law, not to approve any film that is obscene, indecent, immoral, inhuman, sacrilegious or of such a character that its exhibition would tend to corrupt morals or incite to crime. Last year 8,362 reels of film were reviewed.

Fifteen pictures were rejected outright, two of which were later revised and approved with eliminations; and 2,195 eliminations were made on statutory grounds.

The motion picture division has no trouble in classifying these eliminations. 838 were for indecency, 79 were inhuman, 511 tended to incite crime, 752 were immoral or (and here they hedge a bit) at least tended to corrupt morals, and 15 were sacrilegious.

This year the Legislature has before it for consideration a considerable number of bills to extend the New York movie censorship laws. The bills may interest you. One provides that children under sixteen shall be entitled to see only such pictures as have first received the written approval of the Mayor, or of a commission that he shall appoint. Presumably the Mayor's commission would be an entirely separate body from the existing State censorship commission. Another bill provides for two types of licenses to be issued by the State censors—one that the film is fit to be seen by all persons and one that the film is fit to be seen only by persons above sixteen years of age. That might seem a bit difficult to do, but our censors who are unafraid to state just what films incite to crime undoubtedly could draw the distinctions a little finer and say what is good for age 17, what is bad for age 16. Another bill goes even further and has three classifications. It requires three classes of licenses: one for adult exhibition, one for family exhibition and one for juvenile exhibition. The bill defines a movie suitable for family exhibition as "a motion picture adapted to be witnessed both by adults and children." Still another bill extends the State censorship to any matter or material intended in any manner to advertise or publicize motion pictures: and it gives power to the censors to reject any such matter if it is misleading or extravagant in its terms or illustrations or if it is calculated to misinform, mislead or deceive in any material fact.

You can see if these bills go through, we will have a real job with these people that draw \$50,000 salary every year in total.

I told you the reason I got into this thing was because someone suggested that I look into the matter and see if it wouldn't be

advisable to abolish our State censorship. I did introduce such a bill and found out some interesting things as a result. I came to the conclusion first, that the censorship did practically no good whatsoever. Here are some of the examples of bits that they cut out from reels that were shown to them.

They cut out some expressions such as this: "left my youth in the capitals of Europe." Here are some others: "twin beds," "cozy private rooms," "it wasn't love," "don't spend your money there, big boy," "those blondes light up the old place."

Here are some of the scenes that were cut out: all kisses lasting more than four feet of film, the key to a young lady's apartment in the possession of a man not her husband, dances of the "snake hips" variety, wedding ring on finger of unmarried girl, a man carrying a woman in his arms through a doorway.

Now of course maybe some of these things should be cut out. But the point I am trying to make is not that those specific things are objectionable or unobjectionable but they have nothing to do whatsoever with the purpose for which a review of motion pictures whether State or otherwise is imposed. I think you will all agree with me on that subject, that the thing is entirely beside the point and ineffective and doesn't help in any material way to raise the standards for films either for adults or for children. That was the first conclusion I came to.

The second conclusion was—and I am not fitted as many others here at this table are to argue it to you so I will merely state it—if they did try to go beyond that, and these people drawing down \$2,500 salaries did go farther, not merely eliminate these expressions but really pass upon the type of picture which we are entitled to see, we would be the first to object and everyone would object that people of that sort who have no background for that sort of job should be placed over us in positions where they could exercise such a broad censorship. So I came to the conclusion and am willing to fight for it still as long as I am in the Legislature, that this state censorship here in New York State does not accomplish the purpose which we would want it to accom-

lish if we could work out a sensible scheme; and second, if it was drastic it would be a thing that we would all very much and rightfully object to.

I hope that this has been of some value to those of you especially from outside the state that haven't had an opportunity to see how our state censorship operates in New York State and I want you to know that I am heartily in sympathy with the alternative, with a campaign such as this organization is sponsoring, quite separate and distinct from this idea of state censorship.

Resolutions

PASSED at the Annual Conference of the National Board of Review were resolutions growing out of the presentation and discussion of the Conference subject, "Intelligent People and the Movies." Members of the Resolutions Committee were Mrs. Ray D. Champlin of Oneonta, N. Y., Chairman, Mr. Carl Bohnenberger, of Jacksonville, Fla., Miss Kathleen Crowley of Waterbury, Conn., Miss Rita Hochheimer of New York City, Dr. John A. Hollinger of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher of New York City.

BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures in its twentieth annual meeting assembled, reaffirm its unqualified condemnation of legal or political censorship, as expressed either in federal, state or local legislation.

BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures continue its full endorsement and support of the community motion picture program as exemplified in the numerous Councils, affiliated with the Better Films National Council of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, or any other social organizations with similar aims, and

THAT the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures take steps to develop both in elementary and high schools, photoplay clubs of children and adolescents who may become affiliated with the Junior Division of

the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, or any other independent young people's groups interested in the study of the cinema, and

THAT the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures cooperate in every possible way in the development and extension of visual education programs in public and private schools, and in the growth of motion picture appreciation through correlation with school curricula.

BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures express its interest in and its appreciation of the action of New York University, as carried out through the leadership of Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher of its School of Education, in training teachers in the fundamentals of the motion picture as an art form and a factor of social importance, to the end that they may inspire in future generations an understanding of the full possibilities of the motion picture as a medium of expression.

BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, recognizing the need for strengthening the public representation on the Motion Picture Code Authority, go on record as petitioning that authority—through the N. R. A. Administrator, and the National Recovery Board—to take such action as may be deemed advisable to strengthen such public representation in the interest of promoting the general welfare, and of stimulating creative and educational developments in the use of the motion picture; and that this resolution be brought to the attention of the N. R. A.

"If there is any problem in line with the move for better pictures the communities themselves stand as the best judges and community selections rather than official censorship would solve the problem. Community groups should represent civic and social organizations but should banish from their midst the narrow-minded who want to banish everything," quoted from a talk given at a former Conference by Mr. Joseph Mar-ron, then president of Jacksonville, Fla., Better Films Council.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Thunder in the East

Adapted from Claude Farrere's "La Bataille" by Robert Stevenson, directed by Nicholas Farkas, photographed by Roger Hubert, music by Andre Gailhard. Produced by Leon Garganoff under the title "The Battle," distributed by United Artists.

The cast

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Marquis Yorisaka..... | Charles Boyer |
| Marquise Yorisaka | Merle Oberon |
| Fergan | John Loder |
| Hirata | V. Inkjinoff |
| Felze | Miles Mander |
| Betty Hockley | Betty Stockfeld |
| The Admiral | Henri Fabert |

THIS picture, produced by a Russian in France with a cast that includes French, English and Russian actors, is one of those convincing and satisfying films that bolster up the belief that the screen ranks well up with the novel and the drama as an interpreter of human kind. Only a Japanese can tell how truthful this particular interpretation is in its essentials, and a Japanese might find essentials fairly well obscured by the obvious makeup of the principal actors, the Gallic accent of Charles Boyer, the English of Merle Oberon, the Mongolian features of Inkjinoff, that unforgettable hero of *Storm over Asia*. But to an Occidental mind, not too well acquainted with the inner workings of the Nipponese nature, and so accustomed to makeup and odd accents that they do not bother, the

film, through a drama expertly developed and compelling in interest, seems to shed a definite enlightenment on one type of Oriental.

The story is about a Japanese naval officer, intensely patriotic, devoted to bringing his fighting fleet up to the efficiency of the British navy, which to him is the highest in the world. His national and racial pride is so deep-rooted that he is almost a personification of it, but he wants his country to surpass the western nations even in the western ways he despises, and most of all in power. The customs, manners, dress, of his people are sacred to him, something not to be profaned by the eyes of foreigners—in the face of the world he wants to be unmistakably of the world. In him is that deep sensitiveness to alien opinion that makes him hate to be thought barbaric even while he is profoundly sure that it is the other nations who are the barbarians.

His problem as a naval officer is to win a victory with his fleet, and the picture starts with what is reported to the waiting crowds at home as something completely victorious. But some of the enemy ships have escaped, and he knows that in the eyes of the British naval attaché aboard with him he has failed to do something that a supreme commander would have done. He knows that behind the Englishman's polite congratulations is a criticism of his fighting prowess, and his duty to his country will not be done till he knows what his faults are and rectifies them. He must fight a battle that even the English will admit was superbly fought.

The secret he wants to know will be in

the report the Englishman sends home, and it is a secret he must learn. He uses his charming wife, and the casual fascination she has for the English officer, to accomplish his aim. In the end he wins his great victory, but for a price too great—the conflict between his duty to his country and his honor as a husband is annihilating. The old Samurai spirit still so deeply alive in him demands the only outcome—hara kiri.

This is drama of the higher sort, for with all its preoccupation with the old standby of melodrama, the secret papers, its conflict and tragedy comes out of the character of the man. Its neglected wife and Madame Butterfly elements go deeper than the usual footlight stuff in which they so often figure, because somehow the actors give them unusual vitality and significance. Merle Oberon, oddly suited as her exotic appearance is to the role of a Japanese, makes the wife a figure of charm, intrinsic grace and appealing pathos. John Loder, villain as he must appear in the role of the Englishman, seems more an agent of fate—the necessary symbol of something disastrous which must come to the Japanese in their chosen destiny of meeting western civilization on its own ground—rather than the mere stock figure of the casual white man seeking sentimental recreation among an inferior race. Charles Boyer, in particular, gives a surprisingly credible insight into the man driven by his own nature into a tragedy which he foresees completely and cannot, because of what he is, avoid. Among them these players create something that seems true and inevitable, and very moving.

The production, by skilful use of actual scenes interspersed among those staged by the actors and scene-setters, has a vivid atmosphere of reality, which helps immensely in making the people convincing. The fighting scenes in particular are managed with a technical accuracy that satisfies those who know what warships actually do when in action, and for those who, because they do not know, care little about technical accuracy, are given an emotional setting of grim skies, dour waves and threatening wind that provides an appalling sense of real battle.—J. S. H.

(*Rated Exceptional*)

Les Miserables

Adapted from Victor Hugo's novel by W. P. Lipscomb, directed by Richard Boleslawski, photographed by Gregg Toland, musical direction by Alfred Newman. Produced by Twentieth Century Pictures, distributed by United Artists.

The cast

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Jean Valjean..... | Fredric March |
| Javert..... | Charles Laughton |
| Bishop Bienvenu..... | Sir Cedric Hardwicke |
| Fantine..... | Florence Eldridge |
| Madame Magloire..... | Jessie Ralph |
| Cosette (as a child)..... | Marilynne Knowlden |
| Cosette (as a girl)..... | Rochelle Hudson |
| Marius..... | John Beal |
| Eponine..... | Frances Drake |

VICTOR HUGO'S novel is such a bulky thing that it could easily make a motion picture serial, with each episode of feature length; but the backbone of it is the form of drama-in-action the movies made their own from the time they started, which almost never fails to have something stirring about it on the screen—a chase. There is much more to it than that, but that is the framework which gives the man who turns it into a screen-play something he doesn't find too often in novels: the confidence that, in spite of the enormous labor of selecting and balancing and putting together, he has a sustaining stream of movement to carry him along that is essentially motion picture. No need for slow stretches of actors sitting around talking, to tell what it is all about.

Among all the people to whom *Les Miserables* owes being such an excellent film, one of the chief is Mr. Lipscomb who wrote the scenario. It was a prodigious job to take those hundreds and hundreds of pages and reduce them to the length in which a motion picture is ordinarily endurable. Many incidents and events that friends of the novel will miss had to be left out. Mr. Lipscomb wisely confined his script to the lifelong struggle between Valjean and Javert and what that struggle symbolized. Out of it he has made a screen drama that is simple and direct, with timeless human meanings as deep and alive as when Hugo's tremendous indignation against man's inhumanity moved him to such long and passionate utterance.

It begins with Valjean's sentence to the galleys for stealing a loaf of bread. Then the years of torture that embittered and



The Bishop (Sir Cedric Hardwicke) gives his silver candlesticks to Valjean (Fredric March)

hardened him, turning an eager and generous young man into a suspicious savage fighting against the world when his sentence is over. Then the bishop's miraculous sympathy, in the famous episode of the candlesticks, which put Valjean on his way back to self-respect again, to make a new place for himself in the world.

All of this is by way of a prologue, in which Javert appears briefly twice: pleading for his position in the police department, and as a guard in the galleys where he first came into contact with Valjean. Skipping the years in which Valjean climbed back into an honorable position in society, the main drama begins with Valjean as the mayor of a small French town, Javert as the town's chief police official, and the long conflict between the man of mercy and the man of justice starts. The antagonism dimly portended long ago in the galleys is to grow into a life and death struggle, first merely between two men with different creeds of

living, then between an ex-convict who has illegally taken a new name and a relentless officer of the law.

It would be merely very good melodrama if there were not that in the characters of the two men which gives the chase an underlying spiritual, even mystical, significance. The particular details of the French criminal law which were so harsh at the period of the story, and against which Hugo's novel crusaded so powerfully, seem little more than incidental cogs in the plot so far as the interest of the picture is concerned. The strength of the drama lies in the deeper conflict between mercy and justice, out of which a strange and subtle thing grows: while Javert is hunting Valjean, something in Valjean is inexorably pursuing Javert—something like what Francis Thompson called the Hound of Heaven. In the end Javert is defeated, not by Valjean but by Valjean's goodness, by the mysterious contagion of virtue that betrayed the merciless agent of

the law into a deed of kindness. That small deed—merely letting his prisoner go back to say goodby to his foster-daughter—broke the policeman's armor and left him naked; his whole creed of life, his whole ideal of duty, crashed to nothing; because he could not change he could not go on living.

Somehow the picture seems more vivid and important than the novel, probably because its meaning is not obscured in such a mass of words and details. The production helps this vividness, though Boleslavski in his direction yields plenty of times to his weakness for prettifying the scenes with unnecessary dabbling in mere effects of light and shadow. But principally the film owes its strength to its chief actors—always remembering that a writer gave those actors something worth while to do. Fredric March has never given so satisfying a serious performance. Sir Cedric Hardwicke illuminates his brief picture of the bishop with a light that is genuinely saintly, with none of the sanctimoniousness that most actors would have been unable to keep out of the part. But the astonishing revelation is that of Charles Laughton as Javert, a picture of a tortured spirit, fighting against something it cannot understand, for which one must go to the great works of art for a comparison. One wonders if Victor Hugo himself put into that character all that Laughton brings out of it.—J. S. H.
(Rated Honorable Mention)

The Man Who Knew Too Much

Written by Charles Bennett and D. B. Wyndham Lewis, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, associate producer Ivor Montague, photographed by Curt Courant. Produced and distributed by Gaumont British.

The cast

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Lawrence | Leslie Banks |
| Jill | Edna Best |
| Abbott | Peter Lorre |
| Levine | Frank Vosper |
| Clive | Hugh Wakefield |
| Betty | Nova Pilbeam |
| Louis | Pierre Fresnay |
| Nurse Agnes | Cicely Oates |

THIS picture, a deliberate attempt by clever men to contrive a thrilling melodrama, is a brilliant example of what excellent technique can do with a paltry plot.

It will be compared with the incomparable *M* by those who have seen that German masterpiece, partly because Peter Lorre is in both pictures, but compared with *M* it is just a tricky bit of clap-trap. Compared with the ordinary nerve shocker, it is fresh and exciting, with a line-up of faces unfamiliar enough not to betray in advance just the sort of things they will do in the story, and a way of handling incident just enough different from what we are used to to provide a decided edge of novelty.

It is a study of dark deeds against a murky London background. The deeds themselves are stereotyped enough—an important assassination of a distinguished personage is on foot, and a clue to the plot falls into the hands of a man with a little daughter. The daughter is kidnapped to scare her father from giving his clue to the police, and the main body of the story is devoted to the problem of getting the child back alive and at the same time preventing the assassination. After a rather slow planting of the various elements that are to work up into the plot, the thing moves along with fine tension and excitement.

So much of the effect of such a picture depends on its surprises, both of event and treatment, that no one would be thanked for going into a careful description of everything that happens. One will have to be content with a few general observations. One of the striking things about the picture is the way grimness and terror are heightened by pitching the acting in a low key. Nothing is done violently or loudly—a careful style of understatement achieves in the sum total a remarkably gripping force. All of the actors are casual and unassertive, and particularly effective is this method as used by Peter Lorre; always low-voiced, with sometimes a slow, deprecating smile moving over his melancholy face, often completely motionless and devoid of expression, he creates one of the few really sinister characters of the screen. It needs only the underlying significance of his role in *M* to be a great creation.

Another impressive effect comes from the way sound, particularly music, is used as an integral element in the plot and at the same time to enlarge the emotional force of the

action. There are two fine examples of this in the film.

To anyone sensitive to obtrusiveness of technique this picture is likely to seem all manner and no matter. For those who get a pleasure out of watching how things are done, there is quite as much excitement in following how the story is manipulated and photographed as in the plot itself. For the person who simply sits back and lets his movie get to him in whatever way it can—(and what better way is there of enjoying a movie?)—there is something over an hour of good, tense melodrama, with some incidents and backgrounds not yet stale from over-use, and a cast of actors admirably competent to put across the parts that have been given them.—J. S. H.

(*Rated Honorable Mention*)

Paul Muni and the Labor Problem

NO picture easy to recall offhand has stirred up so much serious argument as *Black Fury*. Much of the argument has been passionate and bitter. Which is bound to be so when a film gets at people where they live, with a subject which touches social and economic problems that have the whole world boiling. Everyone to whom such problems are of supreme vital importance is going to look at such a film as this with an analytical—and emotional—attention that he rarely gives to a motion picture. And he is going to give far less of his attention to what the film sets out to be, and perhaps is, than to what he thinks it might have been and ought to have been. The stronger his own convictions about whatever questions the picture suggests, the less he is going to be satisfied with the picture unless it answers those questions in his own way.

The knowing picture-goer is so well aware of how frantically producers abstain from any subject in the least controversial that it is amazing to find people who seem to think Hollywood—or any place in America

—is going to turn out a film that definitely takes sides on anything so hotly disputable as the labor question. As reasonably look to Germany or Italy for pro-communist films, or to Russia for a film sympathetic to capitalism. A movie that runs any risk of provoking protests from any organized group, however small, is considered a bad bet with American audiences unless it has a mass appeal as mere entertainment huge enough to pull people to the box office no matter who objects.

Because of this general timidity among producers, Warner Brothers have been credited—and justly—with a lot of courage for sometimes, and as pioneers, making films out of material that has a connection with the live news of the day, subjects hot with the uncertainties of questions not yet settled and buried safely away among the things taken for granted. *Black Fury* is a courageous film in one respect, and a highly important respect for producers: it ran the danger of either mutilation or complete suppression at the hands of the censors. If there are any people more timid than movie producers they are censors and censorious groups, who quake with terror when anything comes along that might incite some real thought and—God forbid!—some impulses to action. This danger for *Black Fury* was not imaginary: there are places where the film is not yet allowed to be shown.

But except for the shivers it gives to afraid-cat censors, *Black Fury* is a singularly mild and unprovocative picture, so far as its handling of labor problems is concerned. It deals with a strike among mine workers, but in the gentlest and vaguest terms. No one is in any danger of learning from this film the conditions under which mine workers live and work before they are driven to strike, what drives them to strike, or what a strike means in terms of actual living. Nor of the brutalities or violence of either the employers or laborers when the battle lines are drawn up, or the conduct of picketers when a strike is in progress and scabs are brought in. Everything is too neat and tidy and well-ordered to hint at what actual conditions may be. Even the grievances of the workers are put into the mouth of an actor

whom any wise movie fan immediately recognizes from innumerable past performances as sure to turn out one of the villains of the piece, so they are not to be taken too seriously. Though the mine-owners are played by actors also somewhat tainted with the color of other-picture villainies, and their magnanimity can, not unjustly, be suspected of having its tongue in its cheek, the out-and-out scoundrels of the film are a gang who make a racket of strike-breaking, so that the blame for everything is conveniently shoved off onto them, leaving both capital and labor with nothing to their discredit but the fault of being pretty easily victimized.

From which it seems fairly obvious that there was never any intention of making a seriously realistic commentary on strike conditions among mine workers, but merely to use such conditions as a vivid and up-to-date background for the story of an individual which would serve effectively as a vehicle for some actor like Paul Muni.

The story is about a loud, cheerful, generous, stupid Bohunk named Jo Radek, in love with a nice girl, popular with his friends, the last man in the world to think himself the victim of economic injustice. He is a good mine worker, proud of his brute strength, and contented enough with his life. But the nice girl is a bit too nice to want to spend the rest of her existence as a mine-worker's wife, and she runs away with a man who is going to the city. Jo's natural reaction to this blow is to get thoroughly drunk, drowning his defeat and bolstering up his vanity, and in that blustering befuddled state, looking for a fight in which he can prove himself a big strong fellow, he wanders into a miners' meeting where the stool-pigeon of the racketeers has been trying to stir up a strike. Jo, thinking of his girl, joins in the shouting louder than anybody else—"Fight! Betcha m'life—fight!" and without any realization of what is happening he is jockeyed into the leadership of the strikers, a popular fellow with a lot of friends who will follow him.

So long as the stool-pigeon is at hand to prompt him he feels all the importance of leadership, immensely pleased with himself. But as soon as the strike is well on, and the racketeering strikebreakers called in, the

stool-pigeon skips out and leaves Jo with no idea what to do, aware only that his friends have turned from him as a traitor. His best friend is killed by one of the thugs brought in as police, still estranged from Jo, and when the despairing miners are about to return to work and thus lose whatever good their struggle has gained them, Jo, remembering how his dead friend would have fought against such a surrender, determines to prevent it. Loaded with dynamite he single-handed takes possession of the mine, threatening to blow it up if work is attempted before the demands of the strikers have been conceded. Thus will he prove that he was a good and loyal friend after all. And he succeeds. In the end everything goes smoothly back to the status quo.

Looked at as a drama of mine workers against mine operators it gets nowhere. The trouble rises not from working conditions but from a professional trouble-maker, and is solved not according to any principles but by an act of sheer moronic terrorism. But as the drama of a simple ignorant man plunged into bewilderment and fury by his personal loves and loyalties it is moving and stirring, often to a high degree. Intimations of important things are integrated into Jo Radek's story craftily enough to give it a sustaining background, full of exciting movement. The rest is Paul Muni. Though his broken English and bohunk mannerisms at first give the impression that what we are seeing is perhaps only a carefully studied impersonation, the final effect that sticks in the memory is something vivid and powerful, a series of pictures of moments—Jo at the dance, happy, bounding with animal spirit and animal grace—Jo drunk, his self-confidence restored, stopping from habit to shout up at Anna's window and slowly remembering that Anna is gone—Jo planted like a rock in the mine, huge and immovable, fixed with the one idea his simple mind can grasp. There are general scenes to which the director has given a lot of vitality—the meeting of the workers, the fight in the mine, the fatal slugging of Jo's friend. But these are easy to forget compared with the figure of Jo, which owes so much to the fine acting of Paul Muni.—J. S. H.

Depression a la Francais

DESPITE the natural tendency to set down anything that combines music, comedy and the French language as a pale echo of Rénè Clair, who has set the standard for that combination, *La Crise est Finie* is sufficiently engaging to stand on its own feet as a piece of film entertainment. Moreover, its story is told so clearly by the camera that, even without the superimposed sub-titles, it can easily be understood by American audiences.

La Crise est Finie follows the Clair tradition in that it has an essentially simple story dependent upon the wit and spirit of the director. A group of actors is stranded when their musical comedy, after a period

of non-payment of salaries, winds up its wandering career somewhere in the French provinces. Thrown into a state of dependence upon each other, they seek means of providing food and shelter for the company, and it is these efforts, and their attempt to recoup by putting on a cooperative musical show, which make up most of the picture.

There is a good deal of the familiar Gallic verve and not a little of forthright humor that is as American as it is French. The communal life of the group in an abandoned theatre, where they sleep in the orchestra, the boxes, and on the stage, makes them seem almost like a crowd of transplanted Robinson Crusoes, adapting themselves to situations as they arise. All of which is nothing to rave about, but with the aid of good photography, direction and acting, it makes an amusing picture.—J. A. T.

The Young Reviewers Prepare and Present a Program

UNIQUE presentation of the motion picture subject occurred when several hundred young people from New York City, New Jersey, Long Island, Brooklyn and Westchester met in a session arranged by the Young Reviewers which closed the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures' eleventh annual conference. The general topic of this conference was "Intelligent People and the Movies" and the final session was indeed a demonstration of the subject.

A young boy of 15, a pupil of the Birch Wathen School, New York City, as chairman of the day, conducted the session befitting a person of wide platform experience. In his opening address of welcome he said, "Today for the first time in the history of the motion picture, a council of students has gathered to discuss and report on the progress that their respective movie interest

groups have made. It seems impossible when we think that a few years ago the young person was not considered a fit judge for those things that were primarily concerned with his welfare. Adults decided in what activities he might indulge, what his reactions would be toward his immediate problems, and thoroughly agreed as to his responses. This type of mature censorship continued until recent years when the introduction of progressive education began to make people aware of the fact that possibly children could conscientiously judge merits. The ensuing reports are unadulterated by mature influence and will faithfully present youth's reactions to all phases of the motion picture. There is to be no adult supervision, the time is entirely our own and the responsibility of our accomplishments lies entirely with us."

The first part of the session was devoted to delegates from the various schools and clubs having motion picture interests who reported on the origin, working plan, accomplishments and aims of their organizations. Among the organizations represented were the Young Reviewers of the National Board of Review, the Wadleigh High School (N. Y. C.) Motion Picture Club, the Ruth-erford (N. J.) Cinema Club—a girls' organization, and the Junior Better Films Committee—a boys' club, the Jamaica High School (N. Y.) Motion Picture Appreciation Club, the Seth Low Junior High School (Brooklyn), the Riverside Church Motion Picture Club (N. Y. C.), the Cinematography Club of East Orange (N. J.) High School, the Lincoln School (N. Y. C.), Xavier High School (N. Y. C.) and the Textile High School (N. Y. C.). The composite aim of all the motion picture activities was to criticise intelligently and appreciate intelligently the motion picture, whether the organized interest was a study club, meeting during school hours, extra-curricular, or a production club making its own movies. As one young lady of 13 said in telling of her club's work in making a short reel of "Penrod"—"It taught some boys and girls that acting itself does not make the whole picture." The young delegate from the Riverside Church Club agreed with this "during the time we have been working on our movie we have not only enjoyed ourselves greatly but have learned to appreciate to a greater degree the hard work put in by the cast and the staff of a professional movie."

The second part of the session was devoted to special topics—these subjects were chosen and worked up by the girls and boys themselves, without help from anyone. Some of the topics were: "How I Choose My Movies" given by a boy of 11 who said in part, "there is something more behind a picture than the name and advertising. Naturally a theatre will advertise a picture and make it very thrilling or very romantic or whatever it is supposed to be, and as far as the name is concerned most of the names lately haven't anything to do with the story, such as *The Whole Town's Talking*. I would think it would have more of a comical

plot instead of one about the underworld. The way I personally select my pictures is the talk about them—I ask my friends if they saw a picture and what they thought about it but then when I go I like to base my own opinions." A boy of 12 selected "The Pros and Cons of *David Copperfield*" for his subject and said, "the picture follows the book very well. The scenes and costumes are typical of that period of history and the fact that some of the actors are English makes the picture more realistic due to their accent. There is only one thing I feel the picture omitted—although it was rather long I think they should have put in the part where David went to school with Steerforth. This would have appealed more to the young people than the part where Steerforth ran away with Emily—that part was not necessary because it was not particularly thrilling and she wasn't to appear in the picture again." A boy of 11 and one of 16 chose the same topic "A Good Picture and a Poor Picture in My Estimation"—the younger boy grouped all poor pictures in one category "Poor pictures are wild west dramas where the procedure is the same in all of them and there are some love pictures also that I think are absolutely terrible. This type of picture that I consider poor I usually forget about very quickly. However when I see a picture like *Sequoia*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Anne of Green Gables* or *David Copperfield* I am greatly impressed and remember it a long time." The older lad, "When I spend my 30c or 60c or whatever it costs me to get into the movies, there is only one thing I want and that's entertainment. This depends, of course, a great deal on how the picture is developed, produced, directed, photographed. For instance, a picture can be good solely from the point of history—*Henry VIII* and *The House of Rothschild* taught me something about days of which I knew nothing. Then take *Duck Soup*—absolutely no sense to it but funny as anything. I would like to mention two more pictures—one which is the worst and one the best. This worst picture was completely lacking in everything. It was called *Baby Face*. The actress was not much of an actress, not particularly good looking (in my opinion anyway) and the

play was rather shady and off-color. I left completely disgusted with the whole affair. Exactly the opposite was *It Happened One Night*—I can think of nothing in the picture that wasn't absolutely right. It was clean, it was funny and it had Claudette Colbert which is my idea of a good picture any day."

A 14 year-old girl had something to say about "Stars and the Roles I Think Are Best Suited for Them"—after giving specific examples of bad casting and good casting she summed up with "the great number of pictures which have been lower than average in my estimation usually resulted from having stars play roles they did not specialize in." "Go To the Movies and See the World" was the advice of a 12 year-old boy who said, "Although I don't believe in strictly educational pictures I think there can be a certain amount of education in almost every picture especially when it comes to countries and people we don't know. For instance, one of our most popular humorous pictures *Kid Millions* I am sure was not intended to be the least bit educational but it showed us the glamour of the Egyptians. We have to leave it entirely upon the moving picture producers to tell truthfully, as so many people take it for the truth." A little girl of 12 spoke on some discussions her group had had—"Some of the pictures we discussed were: *Barretts of Wimpole Street*—one of the group got up and said he didn't like Mr. March's acting because it was too American-like for that time, and there were certain arguments we had about whether Elizabeth Barrett ran away from her father for revenge or not. We finally proved that she didn't run away for revenge because if she had her father would have been hurt by it and it didn't seem as if he were when he wanted to hurt her feelings by having her dog killed. One of the members was definitely against *Kid Millions*—she said the jokes weren't any good and the acting was very poor. *What Every Woman Knows*—that we had a lot of fun with. We discussed the part where they were trying to marry her to this young man and how that would be very unlikely to happen in real life. Some of the pictures such as *Belle of the Nineties* we didn't bother discussing."

A boy of 12 had a message for the educa-

tors in his "Motion Pictures in Schools and Museums"—"Pictures shown in the classrooms and auditorium of my school are entirely educational films; such as different processes for making coffee, Boy Scouts visits, etc. The only trouble is that they are very hard to see. In fact the only way to tell what most of them are about is by the wording between the scenes. This is due to the old equipment used. It's a bad strain on the children's eyes not to see the films. It is a poor way to economize, to economize on the schools. The museum pictures are not so hard to see but it is very rarely that children get to see them." A 15 year-old boy closed his talk on "Color" with "The Alice of long ago who strode through the Looking Glass has nothing on the Alice of today who can go to the movies which in the future with the tasteful use of color, will be an even greater Wonderland." Other subjects from which we will quote in a future issue were: "Classical Music in Pictures" by a 12 year-old girl, "Radio Dramatizations of Movies" by a 14 year-old girl, "Principles of Judging a Picture" by a 15 year-old boy, "History of the Motion Picture Until Sound" by a 16 year-old boy, "Present Trend in Motion Pictures" by a 13 year-old boy, "What We Want in Motion Pictures" by a 14 year-old boy in which he thought pictures of high school days might be an addition.

It would seem from the above that the boys had the floor but in the first part of the session practically all of the reports from clubs were made by the girls—this part of the program was unusually interesting as the reports were limited to 3 minutes and then 2 minutes of questions were allowed which raised important points. The seriousness with which the young people presented their subjects and their very sane logic and thoughts on the motion picture astounded the adults present. It is worth noting that these young people were not a selected group—they were average, every day boys and girls interested in the motion picture.

The same program was put on April 4th, by the Young Reviewers at the course in motion pictures given at New York University under the joint auspices of the School of Education of the University and the National Board of Review.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

***INFORMER, THE**—Victor McLaglen, Preston Foster, Heather Angel. From novel by Liam O'Flaherty. Directed by John Ford. RKO-Radio, 10 reels. A gripping story of Dublin in the days of the Black and Tans, and of a man who handed over a pal to the English. An unusually dramatic film and a fine study of character, splendidly acted by Victor McLaglen and an excellent cast which includes two members of Dublin's Abbey Theatre Company. Suggested for schools and libraries. Recommended to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. *Mature.*

MARY JANE'S PA—Aline MacMahon, Guy Kibbee. From play by Edith E. Furness. Directed by William Keighley. First National, 6 reels. A cheerful comedy drama about the return to his family of a man bitten by wanderlust, a jack-of-all trades who has to make good with his wife all over again. *Family. Junior matinee.*

***MISERABLES, LES**—See Exceptional Photoplays Department. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family.*

MISTER DYNAMITE—Edmund Lowe, Jean Dixon. From novel by Dashiell Hammett. Directed by Alan Crosland. Universal, 7 reels. A quick-fire mystery story with clever dialogue. The acting is excellent and the interest sustained throughout. *Family.*

PARTY WIRE—Victor Jory, Jean Arthur. From novel by Bruce Manning. Directed by Erle Kenton. Columbia, 7 reels. The damages to a blameless person caused by small town gossip. Simple in its materials, it nevertheless develops a lot of dramatic tension, and stirs the sympathies strongly. *Family.*

PEOPLE WILL TALK—Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles. From "Kayo Oke" by Sophie Kerr and "Such a Lovely Couple" by F. Hugh Herbert. Directed by Alfred Santell. Paramount, 7 reels. A highly amusing comedy in which a happily married couple of 23 years stage some marital troubles in order to bring their daughter and her husband together again but because people talk their little act almost becomes a reality. *Family.*

RECKLESS—Jean Harlow, William Powell, Franchot Tone. Screen story by Oliver Jeffries. Directed by Victor Fleming. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. With the foundation idea of a strange girl marrying a wastrel playboy, this picture covers many walks of life and a variety of characters. Sumptuous production and a large cast of good actors. *Mature.*

***SCOUNDREL, THE**—Noel Coward, Julie Haydon. Screen story, direction and production by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Paramount, 8 reels. The story of a lovable heartbreaker

who is permitted to return to earth after death for a month to right his misdeeds so that his soul might rest in peace. Peppy and sophisticated dialogue, and an excellent cast. *Mature.*

STAR OF MIDNIGHT—William Powell, Ginger Rogers. From novel by Arthur Somers Roche. Directed by Steven Roberts. RKO-Radio, 10 reels. Powell in a good successor to *The Thin Man*. A mystery story handled with gaiety, cleverness and plenty of suspense. *Mature.*

STRANGERS ALL—May Robson, Preston Foster, William Bakewell. Screen story by Marie Bercovici. Directed by Charles Vidor. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. A boy's best friend is his mother even if he's a conceited would-be actor or a half-baked radical. May Robson in a typical part, sharp tongue and generous heart. Mostly domestic comedy. *Family.*

STRAUSS WALTZ, THE—Jessie Matthews, Esmond Knight, Fay Compton. From story by Hubert Barth, Johann Strauss, Jr. and Sr. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Tom Arnold, 7 reels. A pleasant story of the rivalry between the Old and the Young Waltz Kings—Strauss father and son, centering around the composition of the Blue Danube Waltz. More British than Viennese but enjoyable. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family.*

SWELL HEAD—Wallace Ford, Dickie Moore. From story by Gerald Beaumont. Directed by Ben Stollhoff. Columbia, 7 reels. The story of a baseball star and the accident that cured him of his conceit. Wallace Ford and many excellent minor touches make it a likeable picture. *Family. Junior matinee.*

***THUNDER IN THE EAST**—See Exceptional Photoplays Department. *Mature.*

UNWELCOME STRANGER, THE—Jack Holt, Jackie Searle. Screen story by William Jacobs. Directed by Phil Rosen. Columbia, 7 reels. What happened to an owner of racing stables, full of a gambling man's superstitions, when an orphan boy came into his home. The actors—all likeable—counteract the sentimentality of the story, which has a good race as the climax. Jackie Searle excellent as a boy who is not nasty for a change. *Family. Junior matinee.*

VAGABOND LADY—Robert Young, Evelyn Venable, Frank Craven. Screen story by Frank Butler. Directed by Sam Taylor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. "Vagabond Lady" is a boat, the symbol of adventure and of the difference between two brothers who like the same girl. The picture is unusually amusing, with brisk comic action and a number of vastly entertaining characters. Full of surprises and laughs. *Family.*

WEREWOLF OF LONDON, THE—Henry Hull. Screen story by Robert Harris. Directed by Stuart Walker. Universal, 8 reels. A thrilling horror story of werewolfery which sets all London aghast. The acting and direction are both excellent. *Mature.*

Short Subjects

(1 reel unless marked otherwise)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

- ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE (Spotlight Series) — *Paramount*. Ten most intelligent animals. *Junior*.
- COLORFUL GUATEMALA (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. Unusually good. *Junior*.
- FISH FROM HELL—*Melbert*, 3 rls. Interesting adventures with dangerous deep-sea fish. *Junior*.
- HOLD THAT SHARK—*Columbia*. About fishermen culminating in an exciting shark fight.
- JAMAICA—*RKO-Radio*. Beautiful scenic.
- LITTLE NEW YORK—*RKO-Radio*. Comments by the Easy Aces give this scenic novelty.
- LITTLE PEOPLE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. Chic Sale craftily teaches a small boy not to shoot or trap wild animals. Good for Be Kind to Animals campaign. *Suggested for school, library and church use. Junior*.
- MANHATTAN RHYTHM—*Paramount*. Interesting shots of Manhattan and its inhabitants.
- MARCH OF TIME (Third Issue)—*First Division*, 2 reels. Dramatized figures and events in the news: Sir Basil Zaharoff; Huey Long; persecutions of the Catholics in Mexico; development of trans-Pacific air-lines. *Worth being kept permanently available.*
- MORMON TRAIL (See America First Series)—*Vitaphone*. Homes of Lincoln and Grant; settlement of Utah by the Mormons. *Suggested for schools and libraries. Junior*.
- PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 10—*Paramount*. The luxury liner "Rex"; stop camera showing lilies blooming; song makers of the world.
- PATHE TOPICS NO. 4—*RKO-Radio*. Christophe's fortress in Haiti; storks in Denmark; communistic activities of ants. *Junior*.
- ROUMANIA—*RKO-Radio*. Scenes of a country not often pictured.
- SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 4—*Paramount*. Old time stars; Corbett-McCoy match.
- TRIP THROUGH FIJILAND, A—*RKO-Radio*. Picturesque and interesting. *Junior*.

CARTOONS

- ALONG FLIRTATION WALK—*Vitaphone*. Amusing burlesque of rival sport-teams.
- BUDDY IN AFRICA (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone. Junior*.
- CALICO DRAGON, THE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. In color with considerable novelty. *Junior*.
- CANDYLAND—*Universal*. Exceptionally well done and amusing—in color—a child's dream of a trip to candyland. *Junior*.
- ELMER THE GREAT DANE (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal*. Oswald tries to cure Elmer's hic-coughs. *Junior*.
- HYIP-NUT-TIST (Popeye the Sailor)—*Paramount*. Olive is hypnotized. *Junior*.
- I HAVEN'T GOT A HAT (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone*. In color—the animals in school. *Junior*.
- *MICKEY'S KANGAROO—*United Artists*. Highly entertaining account of what Mickey and Pluto did when a kangaroo arrived from Australia. *Junior*.
- KIDS IN THE SHOE, THE—*Paramount*. In color about the old woman who lived in the shoe. *Junior*.
- PICNIC PANIC, THE—*RKO-Radio*. Color semi-cartoon in which some kids are entertained during a shower which keeps them indoors. *Junior*.
- ROBBER KITTEN, THE (Silly Symphony)—*United Artists*. A romantic kitten who learns home is a good place to stay in. *Junior*.
- SWAT THE FLY (Betty Boop)—*Paramount*. A fly impedes Betty's cooking. *Junior*.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS, SERIALS

- *BEGINNER'S LUCK—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 rls. Our Gang in one of their most amusing comedies. Spanky stars in an amateur show. *Junior*.
- CALL OF THE SAVAGE NOS. 3-8 (Serial)—*Universal*, 2 rls. each. The jungle boy and the white girl have more adventures. *Junior*.

- CASTLE OF DREAMS, THE—*Vitaphone*, 2 rls. Toto the clown and a trained dog enliven this musical.
- CHARLES DAVIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA—*Vitaphone*.
- DUMBBELL LETTERS NOS. 15-16 & 18—*RKO-Radio*. Amusing letters from customers.
- GYPSY NIGHT—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 rls. Musical in color aided by animated dolls. *Junior*.
- GYPSY SWEETHEART—*Vitaphone*, 2 rls. Musical in color.
- OKAY TOOTS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 rls. Charlie Chase in a novel and amusing farce.
- ONLY THE BRAVE—*Educational*, 2 rls. Ernest Truex in an amusing farce.
- SINGING SILHOUETTE, THE—*Vitaphone*, 2 rls. Olga Baclanova doing some excellent singing.
- SOCK ME TO SLEEP—*RKO-Radio*, 2 rls. Edgar Kennedy has more marital troubles.
- SOME BRIDGE WORK—*Vitaphone*. The Easy Aces in a comedy bridge skit.
- VAUDEVILLE NO. 4—*Vitaphone*. Good old-time vaudeville.
- WE DO OUR PART—*Vitaphone*. Radio stars.
- WISHING STONE, THE—*Vitaphone*. Dave Apollon and his orchestra.

A Catalog of Selected Pictures

Have you secured yet a copy of the Selected Pictures Catalog, listing pictures for family programs and juniors' matinees as well as the pictures for the mature audience, compiled from selections made by the Review Committees of the National Board during the past year? This Catalog contains also the Principles of Selection used by the Review Committees. Copies are available at 25c from the National Board of Review.

(Continued from page 5)

that the finished product is neither play nor motion picture, but a poor imitation of each. This tendency to copy tends to increase in ratio to the importance of the stage production, evidently on the theory that it is best to leave alone a property that has proved its worth. However sound that principle may appear, its application is more often disastrous than beneficial as so many of our film makers have discovered. What producers have failed to realize in this almost slavish copying of and toadying to the stage is that the motion picture is a medium dependent upon fluidity, changing tableaux and a minimum of dialogue. The secret of transferring a play into a motion picture is simply this: Stick to the principles of movement, change as much dialogue as possible into action and forget that the play was once a huge stage success.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

3 NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. X, No. 6



June, 1935



King Gypo, in "The Informer" (see page 8)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AGE OF INDISSCRETION—Paul Lukas, Madge Evans, May Robson, Helen Vinson. Screen story by Lenore Coffee. Directed by Edward Ludwig. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. An idealistic publisher, a wife out of love and a secretary in love with him, a small son and a crusty old would-be grandmother—all coming together in a struggle for custody of the little boy. Pretty movieish, but with many sentimental elements that usually have strong appeal. *Family.*

AIR HAWKS—Ralph Bellamy, Tala Birell. Screen story by Griffin Jay and Grace Neville. Directed by Albert Rogell. Columbia, 7 reels. Dire plots, including a ray that sets airplanes afire, to keep a young airship line from landing a mail contract. The usual excitement of melodrama, with not so much flying as might be expected. *Family.*

ALIAS MARY DOW—Sally Eilers, Ray Milland. Screen story by Forrest Halsey and William A. Johnston. Directed by Kurt Neumann. Universal, 7 reels. Adventures of a girl who is taken out of her cheap surroundings to impersonate the daughter, kidnapped as a small child, of wealthy people. *Family.*

AWAKENING OF JIM BURKE, THE—Jack Holt, Jimmy Butler, Florence Rice. Screen story by C. Gardner Sullivan. Directed by Lambert Hillyer. Columbia, 7 reels. An unpretentious but human and interesting story of the influence a father and his young son had on each other. *Family.*

BORDER BRIGANDS—Buck Jones. Screen story by Stuart Anthony. Directed by Nick Grinda. Universal, 6 reels. Story of the Northwest Mounties in which the hero and his pal go out to avenge a death and capture a band of dangerous brigands. *Junior matinee.*

BREAK OF HEARTS—Katharine Hepburn, Charles Boyer, John Beal. Screen story by Lester Cohen. Directed by Phillip Moeller. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. Romance with a strong appeal to those who enjoy seeing love survive many storms among glamorous surroundings. A great orchestral conductor and a girl composer from Wisconsin are the central figures, with Hepburn in a part similar to the one in *Morning Glory*. *Mature.*

COWBOY MILLIONAIRE, THE—George O'Brien. Screen story by George Waggner and Dan Jarrett. Directed by Edward F. Cline. Fox, 7 reels. A pleasant but tenuous tale of a cowboy and a snooty English girl, who squabble till they are in love, and after. A different kind of Western. *Family.*

DARING YOUNG MAN, THE—James Dunn, Mac Clark. Story "Safe in Jail" by Claude Binyon and Sidney Skolsky. Directed by William Seiter. Fox, 7 reels. Wild and rapid comedy of the courtship of a young newspaper man and a young newspaper woman, and the startling things that interrupted it. *Family.*

DOUBTING THOMAS—Will Rogers, Billie Burke, Alison Skipworth. Play "The Torch Bearers" by George Kelly. Directed by David Butler. Fox, 7 reels. Amusing complications resulting from a man's struggles with a women's amateur dramatic club, and how he cured his wife of being stage struck. *Family.*

***ESCAPE ME NEVER**—Elizabeth Bergner, Hugh Sinclair. Novel and play by Margaret Kennedy. Directed by Paul Czinner. United Artists, 8 reels. Another story of some of the Sanger family of "Constant Nymph" fame—two brothers, one a musical genius whose temperament sorely taxed the loyalty of his understanding wife. Elizabeth Bergner is splendid—humorous, pathetic, fascinating and deeply moving. *Mature.*
(See *Exceptional Photoplays Dept.* page 10)

FLAME WITHIN, THE—Ann Harding, Herbert Marshall. Screen story and direction by Edmund Goulding. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. A film of more than usual adult interest concerning a woman doctor's efforts to straighten out the love troubles of a young couple. Well written and well produced, with an excellent cast. *Mature.*

***"G-MEN"**—James Cagney, Robert Armstrong. Screen story by Seton I. Miller. Directed by William Keighley. First National, 8 reels. The training of a young man in the Department of Justice and his part in wiping out a gang of criminals. Swift in action and timely, with Cagney as effective as a G-man as he used to be as a gangster. *Mature.*

GLASS KEY, THE—George Raft. Novel by Dashiell Hammett. Directed by Frank Tuttle. Paramount, 8 reels. A well handled gangster story in which a big boss politician is framed
(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Dr. John A. Hollinger Joins the Board's National Council

WE are happy to present Dr. Hollinger to our field members and other readers as a new member of the Better Films National Council of the National Board and this we do through a recording of his activities and his address delivered at the last Annual Conference of the National Board.

Dr. Hollinger's life-long interest has been in the field of education, chiefly in Pennsylvania, his native state. He attended Kutztown State Normal School and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Franklin and Marshall College in 1903, Master's Degree from Columbia University in 1913 and Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1926. He taught in rural schools and in several different high schools and served as Supervising Principal of elementary schools for twelve years. His present position of Director of the Department of Science Instruction and Visual Aids in the Pittsburgh Schools he has held since 1919.

He is one who puts his ideas into practice and he speaks here on the motion picture in directing public opinion from real experience. Under his direction the Elementary Science course in the Pittsburgh Schools has become universal in all elementary schools. The General Science course has been revised. A revision of the course in

Biology is nearly completed. City wide Chemistry tests have been administered recently. In the field of Visual Instruction the City of Pittsburgh has a splendid program. The Board of Public Education owns more than 5000 reels of motion picture films located in the libraries of individual schools and in a central distributing library. Every elementary school building is equipped with a 16mm. projector. Several school buildings have more than one. The majority of the school buildings also have 35 mm. motion picture projectors. Several of the high schools have flourishing motion picture clubs. Some of the high schools have regular weekly motion picture programs in the auditorium assemblies. The installation of 35 mm. sound motion picture projectors is at present receiving serious consideration. One junior high school already has such installation. At present a course in Visual Instruction is being given to a group of teachers in service under the auspices of Pennsylvania State College, Extension Division. Similar courses have been given by Dr. Hollinger at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Denver.

Dr. Hollinger's Conference address on the importance of the motion picture in directing public opinion appears on the following page.

How Important Can the Movies Be In Directing Public Opinion on Public Questions

By DR. JOHN A. HOLLINGER

Director of Visual Aids in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

WE have had a recent interesting experience to show how an indirect approach may be effective in forming public opinion. In a junior high school, composed largely of colored pupils, the lunch hour was very troublesome. Boys and girls would take fifteen minutes for lunch and then chase around the corridors the rest of the time. As an experiment, motion pictures were presented in the auditorium for a period of twelve or fifteen minutes for the pupils after they had completed their lunch. The auditorium soon became so crowded that guards had to be stationed to avoid the rush—no more children chasing through the corridors, no more bad conduct around the building, no more trying to steal away during the lunch period.

The directing of public opinion is a controversial question. Is there public *opinion* in this country on many questions, or do we have public *opinions*? Is there really public opinion at any time except during military action, when the objective is very definite and the whole community thinks as one? Do we have anything like such public opinion for any social activities during peace time?

Cooperative group action to obtain definite objectives is as important during peace times as during war times. The motion picture is an effective device for directing public opinion on public questions because it is objective.

Even as an objective device the motion picture has its limitations. I have had some experience in helping to select motion pictures for definite purposes. Sometimes there are nearly as many opinions about each picture as there are individuals concerned. If one sees a picture in the morning when he feels bright and rested, he may form a different opinion from that formed in the afternoon when the same picture is screened. One's opinion may depend somewhat upon the condition of his digestive system. The fact remains that the motion picture on account of its objective presentation can assist cooperative group action for agreement

upon generalizations around which social activities may be organized and regimented.

With reference to the public question of war we might list several motion pictures with considerable influence in directing public opinion. *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Cavalcade*, *The First World War*, are pictures that have definitely affected public opinion as shown by responses received from those who viewed the pictures.

With reference to the question of banking, the *House of Rothschild* and *David Harum* have had a very definite influence.

Probably governments—municipal, state, and federal—might well use motion pictures not merely for political propaganda, but for getting before the public such important questions as taxation, public utilities, better housing, etc. The facts concerning the relationship between holding companies and operating companies presented on the screen without feeling, without emotionalism, might help the public to understand and to direct thinking about public utilities. Proper objectives could then be set up and our forces could be regimented to attain the goal. The Tennessee Valley Authority has a fine picture which is used to advantage. The Bell Telephone Company has a number of pictures to develop public opinion along proper lines *e.g.*, *Wires and Wings*.

Better Housing is another public question on which public opinion needs formulation. There are a number of different public opinions about Better Housing; cheap rents and the kind of houses in which people wish to live. It has been shown that a slum area in any city costs a great deal more in pauperism, disease and crime than would be the cost of razing the whole thing and rebuilding properly. The Buhl Foundation shows a very fine motion picture to portray what has been done at Chatam Village in our town of Pittsburgh to develop public opinion for Better Housing. So effective has this picture been that when 125 houses had been built, about 500 applications were received to fill these houses.

In Italy the Italian Government regiments the motion picture with the very definite purpose of forming public opinion. Russia is doing the same thing. Turkey has done it by mass instruction with motion pictures out of doors, and the Turkish turban has gone. In China the old Chinese language and other customs are going as a result of mass instruction with motion pictures.

We could continue to give numerous other illustrations. We are of the opinion that the motion picture is more effective than many other devices for communicating ideas, including the radio, since by an intonation of the voice or by the insertion of emotionalism, truth may be biased. For the production of the motion picture *The First World War*, records from government files were secured. These were actual photographs without human prejudices taken on the field of action.

We hope that the time will come soon when motion pictures that have in them outstanding cultural and social values may be used regularly in the schools to formulate public opinion which will help us to settle public problems by cooperative group action. Such pictures could then be used over and over again just as we now read the classics in our classes in literature. In our judgment, such pictures would have considerably more value than much of the senseless clap-trap and useless discussions being carried on under tremendous emotional strain in our school buildings and in other public buildings. I would be willing to risk the showing of good motion pictures over and over again in the schools to the end that we might form far more accurately and more profitably public opinion on public questions.

The strength of the motion picture lies in its indirect approach, in its objectivity, and in the possibility of its fine cultural values.

Popular Art and Profit

By HOWARD S. CULLMAN

At our 1935 Annual Conference when we wished to have presented, at the session devoted to the topic "What Are the Movies Up Against," the subject of "Popular Art and Profit" we went to a theatre man as one best qualified to speak on this, and we are pleased to publish here the contribution of Mr. Cullman, who has served as Commissioner of the Port Authority of New York, has had a wide field of business experience and for several years has directed all of the activities of the Roxy Theatre in New York City.

DURING the period I have been responsible for the operation and management of the Roxy Theatre it has been my province to put many samples of alleged popular art to the supreme test—namely, would they keep the world's largest theatre filled with a sizeable and reasonably contented audience? I have also had before me the very concrete matter of profits. As the representative of a large group of bondholders, my job—above all else—has been to protect their investment, and to try, if possible, to make some money for them.

I think I am safe in making a few generalizations based on my own experience at

the Roxy Theatre. I fully realize the axiom of the industry—that Broadway is not the United States, that a success in New York is not necessarily a hit in New England or the Far West. To a considerable extent, the Roxy Theatre, under its present policy, is an exception to this rule. Because of a low admission price and a popular type of stage production that theatre is today in the broadest possible sense, a family house. All kinds of people and all ages seek their entertainment there. To a remarkable degree the reactions of Roxy audiences have been those of small town audiences, rather than those of sophisticated New Yorkers.

Looking back, over the past two years, I can definitely say what examples of screen art have earned the title of "popular." Judged by the index of box office receipts, our high water mark has been reached with *The Invisible Man*, *Tarzan the Fearless*, *Peck's Bad Boy*, *Little Friend*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Imitation of Life*, and with homely tales starring Will Rogers and Shirley Temple. This is not a complete list, but

it includes the outstanding box office pictures which come to my mind. What, if any, common characteristics can be found in them?

At the risk of offending those who labored to make these very admirable films, I will venture to say that they are not in the first place "art" at all, with a capital or a small "A". Although I personally enjoyed them, I do not see any grounds for endowing them with artistic values which they do not possess, I personally have long ceased to view popular motion pictures as art any more than I would consider the writings of Harold Bell Wright or Zane Grey as literature, although they are the favorite authors of millions of Americans.

This does not mean that I regard these or other successful motion pictures as devoid of virtues. On the contrary, they have many. All the films I have mentioned were well acted, excellently produced and based on an interesting and well-paced story. Without exception, they dealt with human themes and exploited emotions which any English-speaking person with a mental age of twelve and a grammar school education could readily grasp. Also, not one of these films—nor any other which I can recall playing successfully at the Roxy—was in fact or by implication, morally offensive.

Where do these observations lead us? I would say they showed that the quality of popular motion pictures is steadily improving, and that far greater improvement is compatible with a profitable business. The public has learned to expect and like good acting, expert photography and interesting, if not necessarily new stories. Any film which fails to meet these standards is, *per se*, doomed to failure.

This does not, however, mean that the movies have progressed far, or will progress far toward establishment as an art. I have mentioned that the successful films, of which I have first-hand knowledge, were all based on simple, even elementary themes. This is the inevitable limitation of a form of entertainment directed, not at select thousands, but at an audience of millions.

I have learned that the word "art" has no place in my official vocabulary. Instead,

I have been schooled to substitute the phrase "good entertainment." This may appear a Philistine view. I have, however, made the experiment of exhibiting films which were—or tried to be—works of art; pictures such as *No Greater Glory* which was a sincere attempt to use the medium of the camera to express an idea rather than a banal plot. The picture was not a success because it did not give my customers what they wanted, and what they had come to the theatre expecting. Had I failed to learn my lesson from this experience, I would have been derelict in my duties as a trustee. I might enjoy dedicating the screen of the Roxy Theatre to artistically ambitious films, but for the sake of those who have invested their savings in this theatre, I have no right to do this. Neither, to my mind, has a producer, who is gambling with an investment of millions, the right or freedom to indulge his craving for truth, beauty and aesthetic perfection.

There may, to be sure, come a time when the American public prefers the music of Beethoven to that of Tin Pan Alley, when the Atlantic Monthly has a larger circulation than True Confessions, when the poetry of Keats is more widely read than that of Edgar Guest. When that day dawns, we shall doubtless find radio's favorite singers crooning the lullabies of Brahms and the pages of our more blatant tabloids filled with thoughtful and profound analyses of current economic trends. In that remote millenium, motion picture producers will be privileged to turn their minds to thoughts of artistic significance. In fact, they will be forced to. But until then, they must frankly face their job of purveying to the millions the kind of entertainment they can understand and enjoy.

This, however, does not mean that the producers have *carte blanche* to make any kind of film that may be temporarily profitable. As to quality, yes. As to content, no. No other form of entertainment has the opportunity of the motion picture of influencing an unlimited audience, of unrestricted ages and mentalities. The radio is limited to auditory appeal. The newspaper must make its impression through the eye alone. The screen, through sound and

sight, wields a dual power. This is a fact which we must face squarely.

I have read a number of scientific observations on this point. But I should prefer at this time to ignore the findings of the laboratory. To a large extent, results appear to depend on who is financing the investigation. I have read of experiments which show that the young remember none of the content of gangster films. I have elsewhere been informed that practically all motion pictures are devastating to the morals and minds of the young. Perhaps the movies do not influence their audiences greatly, but I personally had never seen a platinum blonde until the popularity of a certain screen star produced a positive epidemic of hair of a shade I had formerly thought reserved for albinos. And I believe that the screen must take responsibility for the national slogan "Come up and see me some time."

Certainly it would be foolish to deny that children and adults are influenced by the speech, manners, clothes and habits portrayed on the screen. I realize that a large part of our film fare belongs to the realm of phantasy, and that as a pattern of conduct it has no more reality than a fairy tale. None the less, we cannot minimize the force of repeated, vivid and dramatic sensations upon the eyes and ears of millions.

What these sensations are to be has been left almost wholly in the hands of those who are interested in immediate profits and nothing else. This point of view if only in the interests of sound business, will have to change. I find the situation in the motion picture industry closely analagous to that in other industries. The pioneering minds which conceived and built vast railroads, which developed great public utilities, have seldom had the capacity for expanding those industries on a sound permanent basis. Daring, ingenuity and imagination—these are the qualities which bring success in a new enterprise. A wholly different kind of vision is needed for the long term expansion of a business so vast that it is, in fact, a public service.

This kind of vision is critically needed today in the motion picture industry—an ability to look ahead, beyond an immediate

profit, into its consequences. Others on this program, will discuss in detail the evils of official censorship. I will here merely record my own belief that nothing could more disastrously cripple this industry and retard its progress than the blight of censorship.

Not only to avoid that evil, but as a matter of sound business policy, it is up to the motion picture industry to shoulder the responsibility which is the result of its own phenomenal growth. It is up to us to lend an attentive ear to our critics, and to face the problem of so-called decency on the screen, realistically.

I might possibly say that indecency does not pay. This, however, is only a partial truth. At the time I assumed the direction of the Roxy Theatre, that institution was in desperate straits. Let us imagine that some enterprising showman had, at that time, come to me with the suggestion that the Roxy be turned into a gigantic burlesque house. He might have been able to demonstrate to me that I could make, for a time, anyhow, huge profits. Even had he been able to do this, I would not have accepted his proposition. Why? Because in the long run the American public does not want a diet of pornography. Because, in putting on burlesque shows I would outrage and infuriate the thousands of solid citizens who have been coming to the Roxy for years with their families. Because I would inevitably cheapen the property and permanently harm those who have invested their savings in it.

On the same basis I would have—and, in fact, did—turn down proposals to dedicate the Roxy Theatre to the arts—whether as an opera house, concert hall or "art" motion picture theatre. I could safely predict that while I might find such a policy edifying, it simply would not pay, because there are not enough Americans who care for the high-brow arts to fill a six thousand seat house four times a day.

This, I think, is pretty much the situation of the industry as a whole. The motion pictures are not in business for a week or a month. Burlesque show policies may pay over a short period of time. There will always exist a small paying clientele for the

(Continued on page 11)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Informer

Adapted by Dudley Nichols from Liam O'Flaherty's novel, directed by John Ford, photographed by Joseph H. August; music by Max Steiner. Produced and distributed by RKO.

The cast

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Gypo Nolan | Victor McLaglen |
| Frankie McPhillip | Wallace Ford |
| Katie | Margot Grahame |
| Dan Gallagher | Preston Foster |
| Mrs. McPhillip | Una O'Connor |
| Mary McPhillip | Heather Angel |
| Terry | J. M. Kerrigan |
| Rat Mulligan | Donald Meek |
| Mullholland | Joseph Sauters |
| Tommy Connor | Neil Fitzgerald |
| Donahue | Leo McCabe |
| Daly | Gaylord Pendleton |
| Flynn | Francis Ford |
| Soldier | Dennis O'Dea |
| Aunt Betty | May Boley |
| The Lady | Griselda Harvey |

THE movies have rarely tried to look at modern Ireland with modern eyes, in spite of the riches of dramatic material to be found there. The reverberations sent through the world by Synge and Joyce and O'Casey have awakened no echoes in California, though in recompense we have been spared the Mother Machree, Macushla Mavourneen kind of thing that might have resulted if Hollywood had ventured timidly into Irish romance. There were some Kelleys paired off with Cohens, a pleasant little vehicle manufactured for bringing John McCormack to the screen but remembered, if at all, for bringing Maureen O'Sullivan to America, a husband-wife-lover affair set in a Dublin uprising—these are all the evidence movie makers have given of any interest in the Emerald Isle.

Which is one reason *The Informer* comes with such novelty and vitality. Another is

that Liam O'Flaherty's novels have little in them of the stuff from which ordinary movies are made. Mr. O'Flaherty fights fiercely against having any sentimental and romantic illusions about his country and countrymen: he goes in for a bitter realism that seems inspired by something pretty close to hatred, and the Irish traits he delights to picture range all the way from braggart blackguardism to blarneying hypocrisy, with little pity for any but the stupid and bewildered. His books would be a stiff dose for the ordinary audience if they were put on the screen in the key he wrote them in.

Dudley Nichols and John Ford have struck a somewhat gentler strain from the harp of old Erin. One with his scenario, the other with his directing, they have made of *The Informer* something that popular sympathy can more conventionally respond to. They have romanticized the motive for Gypo Nolan's turning informer, making him do it for a girl—as if hunger were not an effective enough reason. All the women in the story have been stereotyped into lay figures used to suggest the usual heart interests of commonplace fiction, and do not count very much. But these little compromises have left intact what is essential to the tragedy of a man who was the victim of his own character.

There is probably no blacker form of sin against one's fellow man, to the Irish, than turning informer, as Gypo Nolan did in the Dublin days of revolt when the Black and Tans tyrannized over the city. An outcast even among the rebels, to gain the twenty pounds reward offered by the British he betrayed his pal Frankie McPhillip, who had

been hiding in the wet hills and sneaked into the city on a dark foggy night to steal a quick visit to his mother and sister. By morning the informer was caught, tried and shot.

In the hours from early evening to dawn, in the murk of the Dublin slums, Gypo's inevitable punishment stalks him. Brutal and stupid, a brawny man who always needed his pal Frankie's brains to guide all his actions, he is lost and desperate with Frankie gone. With his pocket full of money he can buy companionship from a crowd of riff-raff who follow him from bar to bar, and he can buy momentary forgetfulness and elation from liquor, even a feeling of goodness by an impulsive gesture of sentimental generosity. But the money, drunkenly scattered here and there, piles up into evidence against him, and at last he has to confront the rebels' tribunal, where his wild and futile lies are worse than a confession.

There is a grim splendor to it, both as a tragedy and as a motion picture. Fundamentally it is honest in intention and sincere in execution. The man's character is truly understood and truly portrayed, with the inevitability coming from its own nature that great tragedy always has to have. The film illustrates powerfully the old dictum that character is destiny. Gypo might have lived a sneaking, sordid life to a dreary old age, drifting to its end with no drama at all, but once his slow wits got the idea of going after that twenty pounds he had to step out of the gutter of aimless futility and fight the consequences of his act, with all that was in him dragged up into the glaring illumination of a final crisis.

The writer of the scenario dealt honestly and ably with the O'Flaherty character, and encompassed it in a framework that follows the best motion picture technique. John Ford has directed it with a fine eye for picture effect, both atmospherically and dramatically. Occasionally he slips into old movie ruts that seem outworn—fade-ins to supply deficiencies in the audience's imagination, for instance, that must seem quaint and unnecessary at best to any alert audience of today. But subtle and powerfully suggestive is the way he has paralleled the blind twistings of Gypo's inner nature with

an exterior presentment of dark foggy streets peopled with dim figures and dimmer shadows, with the action erupting into some place of light and noise whenever Gypo emerges into positive activity. The players, given what the script called on them to do, he has managed well, with much more conspicuous success with the men than with the women. The acutely Mater Dolorosa aspect of Frankie's mother must be held against him—any director who wanted to could surely have subdued her. But Margot Grahame, as Katie, in her earlier scenes, is a real person, not to be blamed for the unfortunate piece of writing that sent her like a blurred carbon-copy of innumerable movie heroines to plead for Gypo's life at the end.

The dominating actor is Victor McLaglen, who shines all the brighter for all the worthless parts he has had to play in the past. He is completely sunk in the sodden body and mind and soul of Gypo Nolan, a creature of the slums pushed on his fumbling way by only the most primitive instincts. Yet, without ever noticeably playing for sympathy, he manages to present a figure that is somehow pitiable. Most of the other men are good, too, with J. M. Kerrigan topping all of them, not merely because he has the only richly authentic brogue in the whole picture, but for his portrait of a grasping Irish toady that for sheer brilliance surpasses even McLaglen's performance.

Pictures like this come rarely, and it will make an interesting test of how justified people are who insist that audiences are eager for better films than producers provide.—J.S.H. (Rated *Exceptional*)

The Youth of Maxim

Written and directed by Gregory Kozintzev and Leonid Trauberg, photographed by Andre Moskvin. Music by Dmitri Shostakovitch. Produced by Lenfilm, distributed by Amkino.

The cast

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Maxim | Boris Cherkov |
| Dyoma | Stepan Kayukov |
| Natasha | V. Kibardina |
| Polivanov | M. Tarkhanov |

THIS picture, which shared with *Chapayev* and *Peasants* the first prize awarded at the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Soviet Cinema, is another example of how far the Russians have gone

in humanizing their film chronicles. They have abated their solemnity about their mission to reform the world, they treat their political principles as something that doesn't need to be argued about any more, and by showing people as simple human beings instead of bristling symbols of ideology their movies have become much more sympathetic and persuasive.

The Youth of Maxim is of course the story of how a boy became a revolutionist. Perhaps he is a typical boy—at any rate he is individual and likeable, which makes it no harder to go along with him in his gradual and natural revolt against the kind of life he had to live under the czar. He was a factory worker, fun-loving and carefree, until the accidental death of one comrade due to bad working conditions, and then the execution of another, shook him out of his boyhood and aroused a social conscience in him.

It is an appealing and powerful picture taken merely as a piece of life. As a piece of motion picture making it is extraordinarily good. One has to see it more than once to get the detached point of view that makes it possible to watch the technical mastery with which every element is used for an intended effect. People, trees and leaves, inanimate objects, engines, steam, whistles and the shrieking of machinery, are all used with unobtrusive precision to compose into a superb example of a sound motion picture. It is all so unspectacular, with such a simple story, that one is inclined to look at it and listen to it without being aware of how artfully all its effects are contrived or realizing that the camera with an exceptional director behind it has done quite as much as the excellent actors to create the emotions the picture awakens. One expects this cinematic skill from the best Russian directors—the obvious step forward which this film makes is in a further experimental use of sound. Shostakovitch, Soviet Russia's favorite young musical genius, is placarded as the composer of the score, but the music he has provided is nothing more than some tunes familiar to everyone who knows Russia's popular music; what he has done that is distinctive is to use other sounds, factory whistles, squealing and grinding

machines, mere noise, in a symphonic background that is a new kind of music. Several modern composers have tried to express the machine age in music—Shostakovitch has not only tried but succeeded, and in the place where such music most clearly belongs, as part of a motion picture.—J.S.H.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

Elizabeth Bergner

THIS last winter brought Elizabeth Bergner to New York in a play called *Escape Me Never*, which moved the dramatic critics to some reckless comparisons to Duse. The play will now be seen throughout the country as a movie, with much the same cast and quite the same Bergner. It is based on one of Margaret Kennedy's tales of the Sanger family—the family which peopled that beautiful film, *The Constant Nymph*—concerning itself with the two musical brothers, one the genius and the other the plodder, and the girl who stuck to the genius through good and ill and still more ill.

It isn't a startling picture, but it shows again what an extraordinarily vivid actress Elizabeth Bergner is. Those who saw her in some of her European films, *Nju*, for instance, or *Ariane*, will not be surprised that she can fill in the obliquely sentimental outlines of Gemma with enough life to give it many moments of astonishing and memorable reality. Those who saw her only in *Catherine the Great* will perhaps be surprised at her physical liteness which seems the natural expression of a liteness of mind, her variety of mood, her remarkable gift for uninsistent pathos. *Escape Me Never* is the sort of thing she can do without half trying. But she makes the film worth seeing, as she will make any film in which she appears.—J.S.H.

Serio Comic

THE SCOUNDREL is an elegant bit of snob appeal, aimed with conscious adroitness at the kind of people who yearn to eavesdrop on the intimate banter of the Dorothy Parkers and Alexander

Woolcotts and have to satisfy their sense of familiarity with the great by always referring to Beatrice Lillie as Bee, though they have never been within even shouting distance of her. Written and directed by Ben Hecht and Charles (Charley) MacArthur, who have shaken loose from Hollywood to give freedom to their talents, and starring Noel Coward, whom Princeton seniors rate very definitely above William Shakespeare, it ought to provide an example of what some of the professional clever people of our day can do when they really go to it. Their effort has been hailed with such almost universal hallelujahs by the metropolitan reviewers that some exception seems to be called for, for the record.

There is no denying the cleverness and facileness of Messrs. Hecht, MacArthur and Coward: past performances have given them plenty of right to their reputations. But *The Scoundrel*, aside from some entertainingly acid sketches of personages who make a business of being conversationally brilliant isn't at all a thing to which three clever people can point with pride, even with the excuse of having dashed it off at odd moments. The first part of it, over half of the picture, isn't a motion picture at all in spite of Lee Garmes' dexterity in shifting his camera around: it is nothing but talk. The latter part, inexplicably turning into a miracle play, whether motion picture or not is simply incredible. After several thousand feet of semi-satiric comedy, unexpectedly asking an audience to believe that Mr. Coward, suddenly plunged into a watery grave, cannot rest there unless someone sheds a tear for him, is asking too much. After all, was it so fatally scoundrelly for Mr. Coward to have been unable to endure indefinitely the adoration of the clinging literary ladies who flung themselves at him? He merely left them to their weeping—James Cagney would have slugged them, and got a cheer from the audience for it. But through some perverse operation of the theatrical mind it seemed proper to regard his conduct as villainy, and to punish it by dragging his ghost through New York streets till the tears, and the miracle, occurred. It takes more than cleverness to pull off such a miracle as that.

Mr. Coward, it must be said, looks reason-

ably like the publisher he is supposed to be in the first part, and remarkably like a ghost in the second.—J.S.H.

(Continued from page 7)

obscene and the vulgarly sensational. But an industry which depends for its existence on the approval of millions cannot risk its good name for this kind of profit. Even if the public itself does not rise in revolt, there will always be an articulate minority—the teachers, the clergy, the leaders of any community, to protest against pictures which genuinely offend public taste.

Similarly, it is futile and even unjust to expect the producer to create films on an artistic level which his public neither understands nor wants. If he wishes, upon occasion, to indulge his own craving for aesthetic expression, this is a laudable impulse. But as a permanent business policy, it is not at present even conceivable. At times motion picture producers have been rather more successful in stifling their yearning for grand opera than in resisting the temptation to cash in on burlesque shows. There has been, upon occasion, a tendency to ignore protests or to meet them with sanctimonious and half-hearted expressions of good will. That this has been an unfortunate policy has been amply demonstrated during recent months. I think we need no further proof that indecency on the screen is a vicious boomerang, which destroys the very business it aims to create. I do not think the motion picture industry should put itself in the position of a peep-show proprietor, bent on seeing how much he can get away with. Neither do I think that any good purpose is served by his acting the role of a wounded Olympian, protesting that decency will ruin his Art.

On the contrary, I urge that he come out in the open as a merchant of popular entertainment; that he use his common sense to discover the standards of taste and decency in his own age and nation; that he exercise reasonable caution to maintain that level.

Once this necessity has been calmly accepted, I am convinced it will be met with the ease and ingenuity which are characteristics of the motion picture industry as a whole.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Shows for Young People

COMMUNITY motion picture activity was the subject of a panel discussion session of the National Board of Review Conference in March. At this session which covered 12 subjects presented by 20 people only a very brief statement of activities and ideas could be made by each. But it offered an opportunity to introduce activities and ideas to a group which could follow up and use them in various ways. And it is encouraging to find such has been the case. One particularly constructive plan which was received with interest and has been considered by several communities and further applied by others was that of the Skouras Theatres Corporation for the utilization of their theatres for special programs for young people once a week.

The plan was presented by Alfred E. McNeill, in charge of the educational activities of this Corporation, and as a result of his presentation there the National Board has been pleased to assist him in further contacts with local groups and in carrying forward the idea into actual operation. Twenty-two community groups in or near New York City where the Skouras Theatres are in operation were notified of the plan and asked to lend their cooperation and support, for here was available to them in their communities a theatre willing to be used as a laboratory for experiments with specially sponsored and controlled programs for children. The programs could be distinctly educational, with active school cooperation from principals and teachers if that was the local need and desire, or entertainment programs of a high quality, if that preference was expressed by parents and teachers to the local sponsoring groups.

New York City which has been pretty far in the rear in the community motion picture activity rallied to this idea with astonishing interest. It was put before a meeting of private school parents and teach-

ers on April 30th by Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher of the School of Education of New York University, who is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Board and Chairman of the Lower West Side Motion Picture Council, and as such one of the Board members particularly interested in seeing this plan meet with favor. There it was voted to give support to the plan and definite help in building the program and patronage for the first special matinee, which was held at the Riviera Theatre in New York City on May 17th. The public and parochial schools were contacted and their support likewise secured for the initial showing.

The program for this showing consisted of *Cimarron*, an excellent documentation of Oklahoma's pioneer history, with high entertainment and instructional values, *The Pied Piper*, a Silly Symphony cartoon, *Bosom Friends*, an unusual little picture of strange friendships among animals, and *We Aim to Please*, a Popeye the Sailor cartoon. The second showing on May 24th offered *Mr. Robinson Crusoe*, the story of an adventuresome man who goes to live alone on an uninhabited island, *City of Wax*, an unusually interesting short subject about the life of a bee, *Playful Pluto*, a Mickey Mouse cartoon, and *The Spectacle Maker*, a lovely little fable beautifully done in color about a maker of spectacles through which people could see beauty and truth. The committee selecting the programs was composed of Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher, Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, Jr., of the Parents League, Mrs. Alonzo Klaw of Friends Seminary, Mrs. Irving Heyman of the United Parents Associations and Mrs. Bettina Gunczy of the National Board of Review.

These two programs served to prove that there is an interest and plans are already under way for a series in the fall. However some of the local groups outside of New York City in Westchester County, Long Island and New Jersey may continue through the summer as well.

These matinees are not to be programs entirely arranged by elders of something they think young people will and should like, but plans are to have the young people themselves take active part in the program planning and the whole putting on of the matinees. The designation Young People's Film Clubs is the approved name and the shows are to be "of the young people, by the young people and for the young people."

Cleveland Activity

THE Motion Picture Committees of the Parent-Teacher Association Councils of Greater Cleveland are considering undertaking a systematic study of the art and problems of the short reel movies. The plan at present involves a monthly screening of subjects with the suggestion of topics for study and discussion, either individually or in the various clubs.

The screenings aim to present several illustrations of types of short reel films that are not generally shown in Cleveland and which will be even more rare in case the double features are restored. By providing a variety the hope is to approximate an idea of what a short reel program in a theatre would be. Comedies and newsreels which are standard parts of any such theatre programs are omitted.

Questions submitted for consideration at the showings are: Do pictures such as we are showing merit a place in our affections? Should we know and honor their artists? Should we demand an opportunity to see them and thus insure a worthy financial return to artist and producer? Do many such films require special showmanship? Are they ill adapted to the ordinary theatre program? Can you conceive of new types of program that might enrich our community life? If we answer either 1 or 2 in the affirmative, could our school non-theatrical projection equipment be used for experimental work? Such amateur work has developed the one-act plays.

This plan has been described to us by Miss Bertelle Lyttle, a member of the Committee and one well qualified to lead this study as she has had years of experience with the

motion picture, as member and officer of the Cleveland Cinema Club. Her service dates back to 1917. She is at present manager of the Cleveland Cinema Club Bulletin. In this Bulletin she has brought the matter to the attention of Club members in the following paragraph.

"We hear much today about studying the art of the photoplay in order to secure greater enjoyment from our screen entertainment. And those who are adventurous enough to try this new idea testify to an increased interest in motion pictures as a leisure time activity. Also this critical appreciation is bringing honor to the many artists concerned in the making of pictures and is stimulating them to do better work. How about the 'Spice of the Program,' the short reels? Have they no art to be appreciated? Have they no artists save Walt Disney? Do they merit no reviews? Should they be released merely as series or numbers? All honor to our Cleveland P.-T.A. motion picture groups who are proposing to study these 'forgotten men' of moviedom. There is a real service to be done. Fine short comedies, character sketches, and stories have almost disappeared, and so exhibitors are troubled in building their balanced programs. While there are a few gems among the cartoons, informationals, skits and musicals, there is also much opportunity for constructive criticism and discussion."

The Cleveland Public Library has been outstanding in its preparation of bookmarks which have been listings of readings related to motion pictures. These have served the dual purpose of directing attention, on the one hand, to the quality pictures at the theatres and, on the other hand to the resources of the library. Usually these bookmarks have been published in connection with specific pictures, but a different kind has been sent to us by Miss Lyttle which is a listing of books and periodicals on motion picture art and which was issued to bring to the notice of those interested in the unusual films, not likely to be exhibited at the large theatres, the offerings of a special little theatre of the city devoted to foreign language films. It is as follows:

How to Enjoy FOREIGN FILMS

BOOKS and MAGAZINES on
the MOTION PICTURE ART

Suggested by the

CLEVELAND
PUBLIC LIBRARY

"KNOW YOUR MOVIES"

R. S. LAMBERT—For Filmgoers Only
WELFORD BEATON—Know Your Movies
ANDREW BUCHANAN—Films
EDGAR DALE—How to Appreciate Motion Pictures

THE FILM—TODAY AND TOMORROW

PAUL ROTH—Celluloid: the Film Today
HUNTLEY CARTER—The New Spirit in the Cinema
RUDOLPH ARNHEIM—Film
WINIFRED BRYHER—Film Problems of Soviet Russia
H. A. POTAMKIN—The Eyes of the Movie
GILBERT SELDES—An Hour with the Movies and Talkies
ELIE FAURE—The Art of Cineplastics
PAUL ROTH—The Film Till Now
ADRIAN BRUNEL—Filmcraft
ERNEST BETTS—Heraclitus; or, The Future of Films

MAGAZINES

Close Up; the only magazine devoted to film as an Art
National Board of Review Magazine
International Review of Educational Cinematography

A fuller list, including articles in newspapers and magazines, is available in the General Reference and Fine Arts divisions of the Library.

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THE above reminds us to ask if you have received a copy of the list compiled by the National Board of "Books on the Motion Picture." If not we suggest you send for it in connection with your study program.

For Users of Selected Pictures Guide

THIS magazine will, as you know, not be published during the summer, this June issue being the last one until fall. Information however on the selected pictures is available all the year around in the Weekly

Guide to Selected Pictures, and to our readers who need this through the summer, for their local activity, we will send regularly copies of the Weekly Guide, or a specially prepared monthly guide, upon receipt of request for it. We do not want to send this needlessly to those who are away and would not be caring for it but to those who wish it we will gladly make available the service.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

by his enemies and accused of murder but his right hand man comes to his aid. *Mature.*

GOIN' TO TOWN—Mac West, Paul Cavanaugh. Screen story by Mae West. Directed by Alexander Hall. Paramount, 8 reels. Having untold wealth, Mae West wants to become a lady. Breaking into society, she cleverly outwits those who are trying to break her. Highly amusing but somewhat toned down compared with her earlier pictures. *Mature.*

HEADLINE WOMAN, THE—Roger Pryor, Heather Angel. Screen story by Jack Natteford and Claire Church. Directed by William Nigh. Mascot, 7 reels. A newspaper story of a feud between the police and the newspaper men. Amusing and peppy dialogue. *Family.*

HOORAY FOR LOVE—Gene Raymond, Ann Sothorn. Story by Marc Lachman. Directed by Walter Lang. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. Lively and most entertaining musical show, with good songs, amusing comedy and excellent dancing. *Family.*

*IN CALIENTE—Edward Everett Horton, Pat O'Brien, Dolores Del Rio. Screen story by Jerry Wald and Julius Epstein. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. First National, 8 reels. A gay and highly diverting comedy with music and dancing, centering around a man's being kidnapped to Mexico to save him from a designing woman. It escapes most entertainingly from the routine musical show type. *Mature.*

JUSTICE OF THE RANGE—Tim McCoy. Screen story by Ford Beebe. Directed by David Selman. Columbia, 6 reels. Range war, cattle rustling, the stranger who turns out to be a detective and saves the girl's father's ranch. *Family.*

LET 'EM HAVE IT—Richard Arlen, Virginia Bruce. Screen story by Joseph March and Elmer Harris. Directed by Sam Wood. United Artists, 9 reels. Like the Northwest Mounties, the Department of Justice always gets its man. An exciting drama with plenty of thrills and suspense. *Mature.*

MEN OF THE HOUR—Richard Cromwell, Wallace Ford, Billie Seward. Screen story by Anthony Coldeway. Directed by Lambert Hillyer. Columbia, 6 reels. A young romance with a background of newsreel cameramen. *Family.*

MURDER IN THE FLEET—Robert Taylor, Jean Parker. Screen story and direction by Edward Sedgwick. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 7 reels. Murder mystery aboard the U. S. S. Carolina. Fast moving with plenty of comedy relief. *Family*.

***OIL FOR THE LAMPS OF CHINA**—Pat O'Brien, Josephine Hutchinson. Novel by Alice Tisdale Hobart. Directed by Merwyn LeRoy. First National, 9 reels. A dramatically interesting story of the hardships and dangers faced by a young man and his wife in China where he has been sent by his oil company. The story follows the book and is both well acted and directed. *Family*.

ONE FRIGHTENED NIGHT—Charles Grape-zein, Mary Carlisle. Story by Stuart Palmer. Directed by Christy Cabanne. Mascot, 7 reels. An exciting murder mystery concerning an old man, his millions and his greedy family. *Family*.

OUR LITTLE GIRL—Shirley Temple. Story "Heaven's Gate" by Florence L. Pfalzgraf. Directed by John Robertson. Fox, 6 reels. Story of domestic trouble—a busy doctor and his lovely young wife become estranged but are brought together again by the love of their little girl. *Family*.

***PUBLIC HERO NO. 1**—Chester Morris. Joseph Calleia, Jean Arthur, Lionel Barrymore. Screen story by J. Walter Rubin and Wells Root. Directed by J. Walter Rubin. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Rattling adventure story, about agents of the Department of Justice tracking down a gang of criminals. Very exciting, with natural and lively humor and some interesting characters. *Mature*.

RAVEN, THE—Karloff, Bela Lugosi. Screen story by David Boehm and Jim Tully. Directed by Louis Friedlander. Universal, 7 reels. A super-horror tale of a madman whose morbid interest in Poe's stories makes him an inhuman monster. A hair-raising and blood-curdling yarn, but interesting for those who like the type. *Mature*.

UNDER THE PAMPAS MOON—Warner Baxter, Ketti Gallian. Screen story by Gordon Morris. Directed by James Tinling. Fox, 8 reels. A colorful and highly amusing story of a gaucho whose love for his horse and a beautiful Parisian singer lead him from his native plains to the night life of Buenos Aires. Besides the numerous hilarious episodes there is some fine singing, and a lovely dance by Veloz and Yolanda. *Family*.

VILLAGE TALE—Randolph Scott, Kay Johnson. Novel by Phil Stong. Directed by John Cromwell. RKO-Radio, 9 reels. Small town meanness, centering around the rich young man of the place, an unhappily married girl and the eccentric figures that hang around the village store. *Mature*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless otherwise marked)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

EFTER KL. 5 (After Five O'Clock)—*Scandinavian*. Work done, Stockholm goes to the country for play and sport. Swedish dialogue.

FIGHTIN' FISH—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Salmon fishing.

FLYING FEET (World of Sports)—Columbia. Several kinds of foot racing including two exciting victories of Glen Cunningham's.

GOING PLACES NO. 9—*Universal*. Lowell Thomas showing interesting things.

I GOSTA BERLINGS LAND (In Gosta Berling's Country)—*Scandinavian*. Selma Lagerlof talks (in Swedish) while the camera shows picturesque scenes of the Swedish countryside.

LOS ANGELES, WONDER CITY (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Some unfamiliar angles of the southwestern metropolis.

***MARCH OF TIME NO. 4**—*March of Time Dist. Corp.* Excellent, both in choice and putting together of material and in the comment. Includes sections on how news is collected in Washington, how Russia is developing, and naval war maneuvers.

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 11—*Paramount*. Main waterways of the world; colored scenic; etc.

PATHE TOPICS NO. 5—*RKO-Radio*. Trout fishing on the River Dee; the camera in its cradle; how sunshine develops food in green leaves, showing the growth of plants by means of the stop camera.

POPULAR SCIENCE—*Paramount*. What science can do for the world. Suggested for schools and libraries.

QUEBEC—*RKO-Radio*. Visiting the lovely and quaint city of Quebec.

REMEMBER THE MAINE (See America First Series)—*Vitaphone*. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Junior*.

SPORTING NUTS—About eccentric hunters, fishers, etc. Amusing.

STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 10—*Universal*. Small Western town governed by women; bull tamer; alligator wrestling, etc.

TAMING OF THE WILD—*Educational*. How wild animals, and even tame ones, are trained to do tricks. *Junior*.

WESTWARD BOUND (See America First Series)—*Vitaphone*. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Junior*.

CARTOONS

CHOOSE YOUR WEPPINS (Popeye)—*Paramount*. Another crook is vanquished. *Junior*.

GOOD LITTLE MONKEYS—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In color full of clever fantasy.

MERRY KITTENS (Rainbow Parade Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*. Three little kittens plague the life out of a pooch. *Junior*.

MY GREEN FEDORA (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone*. In color. *Junior*.

NO! NO! A THOUSAND TIMES NO! (Betty Boop)—*Paramount*. Though tempted by riches Betty remains true to Truc Blue Harold.

OPERA NIGHT (Terrytoon)—*Educational*. Strange and amusing treatment of "Romeo and Juliet." *Junior*.

SPRINGTIME SERENADE—*Universal*. Pleasing little color cartoon with music—the wise old ground hog warns the animals against the false spring. *Junior*.

TOWN HALL FOLLIES (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—*Universal*. Oswald plays hero again. *Junior*.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

ALL COLORED VAUDEVILLE SHOW—*Vitaphone*. Good negro entertainers.

BROADWAY HIGHLIGHTS—*Paramount*. Visiting celebrities backstage along Broadway.

CALL OF THE SAVAGE NOS. 9-12 (Serial)—*Universal*, 2 rls. each. The wild boy, the white girl and her father finally find the hidden city. *Junior*.

CHAIN LETTER DIMES—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Some amusing exaggerations—perhaps not really exaggerated—of the send-a-dime racket.

DUMB-BELL LETTERS NOS. 19-20—*RKO-Radio*, 1 rl. each.

MEMORIES AND MELODIES—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Stephen Foster songs, strung together on a slight plot in which Foster figures, not too attractively. Done in Technicolor, with sentimental appeal.

MIRACLE RIDER, THE (Serial)—Mascot, No. 1, 5 rls.; Nos. 2-9, 2 rls. each. Story of the wrongs suffered by the Indians through the greed and trickery of the white man, starring Tom Mix as the friend of the wronged Indians. *Junior*.

NIGHT AT THE BILTMORE BOWL, A—*RKO-Radio*, 2 rls. Comedy featuring Jimmie Greer and his orchestra.

NO MOTOR TO GUIDE HIM—*Paramount*. Shorty, the chimpanzee goes on an automobile trip. *Junior*.

POKER AT EIGHT—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. One of the best of the Charlie Chase comedies.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 9—Columbia. More novel and interesting than usual.

TEACHER'S BEAU—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. An amusing Our Gang comedy in which they try to prevent their teacher from getting married. *Junior*.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|--|---|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| | \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions |
| | \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| | \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. X, No. 7



Sept.-Oct., 1935



Greta Garbo with Basil Rathbone and Freddie Bartholomew at home in the film
"Anna Karenina" (page 10)

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

20 cents a copy

\$2.00 a year

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BIG BROADCAST OF 1936, THE—Jack Oakie, Lyda Roberti, Henry Wadsworth, Burns and Allen. Screen story by Walter DeLeon, Francis Martin and Ralph Spence. Directed by Norman Taurog. Paramount, 10 reels. A fast-moving and amusing hodge podge of radio and screen talent—Amos 'n Andy, Bing Crosby, Charles Ruggles, Mary Boland, Bill Robinson and others. Two radio Romeos are kidnapped by a lovesick Countess and taken to her terrifying palace but they have a marvelous television-radio which picks up anything going on in the world. *Family.*

***BISHOP MISBEHAVES, THE**—Edmund Gwenn, Lucille Watson, Norman Foster, Maureen O'Sullivan. From play by Frederick Jackson. Directed by E. A. Dupont. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. An immensely satisfying comedy drama about a bishop with a passion for playing detective. Scenario, direction, acting, all make the whole thing excellent entertainment. *Family.*

***BROADWAY MELODY OF 1936, THE**—Jack Benny, Eleanor Powell. Screen story by Moss Hart. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. The story of the unknown girl who becomes a star. Many new and refreshing personalities, a handsome production with many novelties, particularly a lot of excellent dancing. *Family.*

***DARK ANGEL, THE**—Merle Oberon, Fredric March, Herbert Marshall. From play by Guy Bolton. Directed by Sidney A. Franklin. United Artists, 10 reels. Moving story of a man blinded in the war, and his efforts not to be a burden on those who loved him. An unusually good cast and production, with the three principal parts beautifully acted. *Mature.*

FIGHTING YOUTH—Charles Farrell, June Martel. Screen story by Stan Meyer. Directed by Hamilton McFadden. Universal, 9 reels. Taking advantage of recent publicity, this picture makes the villain a professional agitator who stirs up the radical element in a state college against football. Otherwise it is an entertaining football picture of exciting moments, comedy and young love. *Family.*

FRECKLES—Virginia Weidler, Tom Brown, Carol Stone. From novel by Gene Stratton Porter. Directed by Edward Killy and William Hamilton. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. Entertaining picturization of the old favorite novel, with the engaging little actress, Virginia Weidler, taking top honors. *Family. Junior matinee.*

GAY DECEPTION, THE—Francis Lederer, Frances Dee. Screen story by Stephen Avery and Don Hartman. Directed by William Wyler. Fox, 7 reels. Delightful comedy of a Western girl who came to New York for a blow-out and ran into an extraordinary bell-boy in the hotel. Gay and humorous throughout. *Family.*

GUARD THAT GIRL—Robert Allen, Florence Rice. Screen story and direction Lambert Hillier. Columbia, 7 reels. An exciting mystery story about a girl impersonating an heiress whose life is threatened, and the two detectives who guard her and finally capture the guilty person. *Family.*

PHANTOM FIEND, THE—Ivor Novello, Elizabeth Allan. From novel "The Lodger" by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. Directed by Maurice Elvey. First Division, 7 reels. A gripping and terrifying tale of several brutal murders committed in the London fog, and the suspicious actions of a charming but melancholy young musician. Some bits of amusing comedy relieve but do not detract from the mounting feeling of horror. Excellent characterizations and fine direction. *Mature.*

POWDERSMOKE RANGE—Harry Carey, Hoot Gibson. Screen story by William C. MacDonald. Directed by Wallace Ford. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. A three-ring Western, acted by a big round-up of Western stars—Wally Wales, Tom Tyler, Bob Steele and others, which gives it an interest not created by the rather repetitious and sometimes draggy story. *Family. Junior matinee.*

PUBLIC MENACE, THE—Jean Arthur, George Murphy. Screen story by Ethel Hill and Lionel Houser. Directed by Frle C. Kenton. Columbia, 8 reels. A gay and lively tale of how a girl got her man, in the process of which a big gangster-leader is brought to bay. *Family.*

SPECIAL AGENT—George Brent, Bette Davis, Ricardo Cortez. Story idea by Martin Mooney. Directed by William Keighley. Warner, 7 reels. How the Federal Government finally got a
(Continued on page 14)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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New Members Welcomed to the Council

THE National Board of Review is happy to announce the addition of seven new members to its Better Films National Council during the past months. All have a very active interest in motion pictures and their effective use in different ways. Three are from the distinct field of education and the others as public spirited citizens give lay service to the community motion picture activity.

Both of these interests are combined in the activities of Mr. George W. Cooper who is President of the flourishing Rochester (N. Y.) Better Films Council and Principal of the Theodore Roosevelt School of that city. This school has for several years been showing films of an educational nature and directing the attention of the students in a constructive way to the better entertainment pictures. Motion picture appreciation is receiving wide attention in all the Rochester schools.

The outstanding work of Miss Rita Hochheimer in the use of films in education is well known as she is one of the pioneers in this activity. She began as assistant to the Director of Visual Instruction of the New York City schools in 1920 and has continued through the years her connection with the city schools serving at the present time as assistant director in charge of all activities of the Bureau of Visual Instruction of the Board of Education. This Bureau has three basic functions: first, it supplies various types of equipment and materials for visual instruction in elementary and junior high schools; second, it assists in keeping

equipment in good condition in the schools; and third, it trains teachers by stimulating and encouraging sound pedagogical procedures in the use of these materials.

The American Museum of Natural History has through the Department of Education done notable work with motion pictures. Mrs. Grace Fisher Ramsey as Associate Curator of this Department was in large measure responsible for this attention given to the motion picture in the activities program with teachers and pupils. She is at present Acting Curator and continues in this position to extend the motion picture interest. Both Miss Hochheimer and Mrs. Ramsey have contributed to the programs of the National Board Conferences from their wide experience in motion picture use, and both have served as officers in various Visual Instruction Associations, local and national.

The other four new members have given each for a number of years of their time and enthusiasm to the various phases of community activity. Mrs. Irving Heymann is particularly interested in the motion picture as related to the child, for four years she has served as Chairman of the Motion Picture Committee of the Horace Mann School of New York City and has prepared a service of information for the school Bulletin. These recommendations are also used by the Ethical Culture School and thus they reach a large and interested parent public. She has prepared like information for the United Parents Associations of New York City in a column called "What to Do, See

and Hear with the Children" and has acted on various committees formed for the showing of special programs for children.

Mrs. W. H. Howard of Port Chester, N. Y., when serving as Chairman of the Civic Section of the Port Chester Woman's Club devoted a keen interest to the subject of motion pictures. This interest resulted in the formation of a Better Films Council following an enthusiastic meeting at which Mrs. Howard was instrumental in bringing together representatives of many organizations in the community who have continued to give their support to the Council activities. She also serves as a chairman in the Westchester County Motion Picture Council.

Another community in Westchester County is represented in this new membership and that is White Plains. Mrs. George E. Packard of that city has worked with the National Board for a number of years, bringing to her new home and to the Board in 1928 her interest in children's film programs first begun in Albany, N. Y., with the Children's Entertainment and Film Guild.

Mrs. Heymann, Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Packard are all members of the Review Committee of the National Board. Mrs. Heymann is especially active because of her Bulletin chairmanship, while Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Packard bring the advantage of their experience from field community activity to the work of the Board and carry in turn the work of the Board into their local activity.

Mrs. Fred Ross represents several New Jersey communities as she lives in West Englewood, is Chairman of Motion Pictures of the Bergen County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations and Chairman of Better Films of the Hackensack Woman's Club. In these two capacities she has been the leader of a very successful series of junior matinees at the Fox Theatre in Hackensack. She has told of this work in past issues of this magazine and at Conferences of the National Board from which others report that they have gained renewed enthusiasm.

The Better Films National Council personnel is an active one giving real service to the National Board and its Council program of activity. These new members will

offer valuable contribution to this program and they are cordially welcomed and introduced to our field members.

University Cinema Course

THE Motion Picture: Its Artistic, Educational and Social Aspects was the title of a comprehensive course given at New York University during the school year 1934-35. This course, the first of its kind, was presented under the direction of Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher, Associate Professor of the School of Education, and the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures. It proved popular and profitable and is to be repeated this year during the two school semesters.

It is a unique course with leading authorities presenting every phase of the motion picture in modern life. The lectures are illustrated with film showings and field trips are taken to places of interest.

The subjects outlined for the first term are: *The March of the Movies*, showing the National Board's historical film compilation; The Technical Development of the Motion Picture; The Experimental Film; Color in Motion Pictures; Music in Motion Pictures; The Short Subject and the Animated Cartoon; Newsreels; Personal Motion Pictures; The Production and Direction of Photoplays; The Author and the Motion Picture; The Art of Acting for the Motion Picture; The Problems of Motion Picture Production; The Art of the Motion Picture; Popular Art and Profit in Motion Pictures; The Exceptional Photoplay.

Registration for this course is open until October 15th at the University. It offers subjects of such varied appeal that the general public will be interested and for them arrangements have been made for attendance at single lectures.

The Human Adventure

A film which was described as "beautiful," "thrilling" and "fascinating" when shown to the National Board is now to have wide release. And surprising as it may seem, these adjectives were not applied to a super-entertainment film but to one

(Continued on page 13)

The Motion Picture and the Museum

By JOHN E. ABBOTT

The National Board is greatly interested in the preservation of outstanding films of the past, in their use as a visual history of the screen and as a means of study making for a fuller understanding and enjoyment of all current films. Therefore, Mr. Abbott of the staff of the Museum of Modern Art was entirely correct, when in delivering the following address at the 1935 Conference of the National Board, he expressed the feeling that the film project of the Museum had all the good wishes of the Board. Mr. Abbott also said at that time as the plans of those at the Museum became effective they would look to the Better Films Councils throughout the country to lend their support. This will undoubtedly be forthcoming when the idea is presented, as it is right in line with one of the important activities of such groups.

IT was several years ago—thirteen years to be exact—that George William Eggers, then the director of the Denver Art Association opened the doors of a museum to the motion picture. He wrote, early in 1922, that the Denver Art Museum hoped to see this art, the motion picture, set in its rightful place with painting, sculpture, architecture and the handicrafts.

Though there had already, at that time, been a certain amount of talk about "the art of the motion picture," nevertheless Mr. Eggers' words must have sounded rather strange and idealistic then. There has been a great deal more talk since 1922 about "the art of the motion picture," but even now it could hardly be said that the motion picture has been set in its rightful place with painting, sculpture and the other arts. Films have been shown in museums and art galleries—films of all kinds, as well as those of an educational nature. But they have been shown rather as concerts are also given in similar buildings, as a diversion and relaxation rather than as exhibitions of art. Men and women who are well acquainted with the names of eminent painters and sculptors, and well versed in the other arts, as a rule are quite ignorant of the names of such outstanding directors of films as Pudovkin, Eggeling, Grierson, Pabst or Capra. No arrangements have been made—none

have been possible—by our museums or our colleges to enable students to follow the development of the motion picture through its successive stages, or to give them the means of bringing a well-grounded critical appreciation to bear on the films they see from week to week in the cinemas.

That the motion picture has not been permitted freely to take its rightful place with the other arts is not perhaps so surprising. There has been a considerable prejudice against the film, which the National Board of Review has done a splendid work in combating. Neither the public at large nor the leaders of opinion have been accustomed to take the film really seriously—and it is a very young art—the only radically novel one to come to us since the dawn of history. There is no doubt the very understandable feeling that the film is still too junior to join the circle of its elder sisters the Muses. Walter Pater might have been speaking of film directors, when he wrote years ago of "a certain number of artists who have a distinct faculty of their own, by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere; and these, too, have their place in general culture, and must be interpreted to it by those who have felt their charm strongly, and, they are often the objects of a special diligence and a consideration wholly affectionate, just because there is not about them the stress of a great name and authority."

I suggest that it is the proper function of the Museum of Modern Art to lend that authority which is now lacking, to the work of the great film makers.

The Museum of Modern Art is young too, and very much a child of the 20th century. It seems appropriate that it should sponsor the movies in the way that Mr. Eggers pointed to in Denver thirteen years ago.

That the motion picture is a popular art is one of its greatest assets. It lacks authority, but it is living and lively, it is of our own time, it speaks in terms we can all understand. Contemporary and popular as it is, the motion picture nevertheless has

traditions and tendencies which are the proper material for study. Its very influence on modern life and thought entitles it to a serious examination, while its inherent aesthetic qualities entitle it to a place with the arts.

I have heard the opinion expressed that architecture and the motion picture are the two most important arts of the 20th century. The Museum of Modern Art has played a not inconsiderable role in making widely known the developments in international architecture of the past forty years. The time has now come when this same institution also plans to form an active motion picture department.

This past winter, the Museum arranged a program of ten performances of movies for the Wadsworth Atheneum, that very lively museum in Hartford, Connecticut. The Wadsworth Atheneum had previously shown many outstanding movies, but I want to place special emphasis on this program. It had the general title "The Motion Picture 1914 to 1934." It ran the gamut from *The Birth of a Nation* to *The Thin Man*, in chronological order, by way of movies representative of the German, the Russian, the French contributions to the body cinematography. It included a Mack Sennett comedy, a Silly Symphony, a Russian animated cartoon and one of those excellent British nature-study shorts, as well as abstract and experimental films. Critical and historical notes on the films were distributed to the audience each time. I suggest that a film fan who happened also to be interested in the movies as a living art would, after seeing that procession of movies, have at least a basic understanding of the stages through which the motion picture has progressed, as well as of the innumerable styles and modes in which it can express itself. I feel confident, too, that such a film fan would thereafter more keenly appreciate current pictures, such as *Chapayev* (which would remind him of the early Griffith) and *Ruggles of Red Gap*, which ought to make him regret that Chaplin's *Woman of Paris* had not been included in the Hartford program.

The Museum of Modern Art in addition to showing films itself, plans to develop this kind of activity, and to do its utmost to

make accessible to other museums and to colleges, programs of films which will provide the material for a critical approach to and knowledge of the movie. The difficulties I need not suggest to anyone here. On the other hand, the encouragement the Museum is receiving augurs well for the future. The industry has promised its cooperation. It seems also that museums and colleges—not just one or two, but many of them all over the country—welcome the suggestion and are anxious to cooperate by showing such programs. We hope with their support to make accessible to their students new films that call for acclaim or present innovations, old films that have passed out of circulation but deserve revival, experimental films that are often talked about but are seldom visible, foreign films that find their public with difficulty. These will be presented, I should perhaps repeat, not as a distraction but as material for study by that considerable part of the population that is already interested in the other arts but which—so we gather from their professors and museum directors—is most devoted to the film.

The position with the motion picture today is such as would arise if no paintings could be seen anywhere by students but those painted within the past year, and if it were possible therefore to read about but not actually to see, even in reproductions, the great paintings of the past. An intelligent and critical appreciation of painting would be very difficult under such circumstances, and so it is with the film. We hope to remedy this, and at the same time to remedy a curious misconception. We find that the younger students of the film have formed the impression that foreign-made films almost exclusively are those in which value is to be sought. This may be because so many of the Little Theatres have sponsored chiefly foreign pictures, since those are not seen readily elsewhere. In any case the younger film-goers seem unaware that the film is a markedly American expression, that it was by studying American films that the makers of outstanding foreign movies gained new inspiration, or that their innovations in turn have constantly refreshed our native production. There is, through *The Birth of a Nation*, a

blood relationship between *Chapayev* and *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* that makes both of them more interesting. It is well that this should be understood by the student.

* * * * *

Since the delivery of this lecture several months ago the plan has developed materially. The Museum has received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to enable it to carry out its project of assembling a library of outstanding films and making them available for study in museums and colleges. This new department known as the Museum of Modern Art Film Library Corporation is established at 485 Madison Avenue, N. Y. C., with the following officers: John Hay Whitney, President; John E. Abbott, Vice-President and General Manager; Edward M. M. Warburg, Treasurer and Iris Barry, Curator. Miss Barry is a former English motion picture critic and founder of the London Film Society, and known to many of our readers as the author of "Let's Go to the Movies."

A Midsummer Night's Dream

THIS fall is to bring us *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in an ideal form—the celluloid, putting as it does few limits upon imagination or upon execution. And especially when this medium is in the hands of no less an artist than the noted European stage director, Max Reinhardt, are expectations fulfilled. Combined with Reinhardt's masterly direction of this Shakespearean drama is the impressive music of Mendelssohn. It is in every sense a superb production which Warners have been long in the making and are now to release. A complete review of the film will appear in our next issue.

The opening will be held in New York City October 9th. Later the film will be road-showed throughout the country and all will have the opportunity to see and enjoy it. This brings to our mind for a resaying what Mr. Reinhardt said when speaking at the National Board of Review Luncheon several years ago. He said, "The motion picture in its immediacy and its compactness, in its uninterrupted change of scene,

Will Rogers

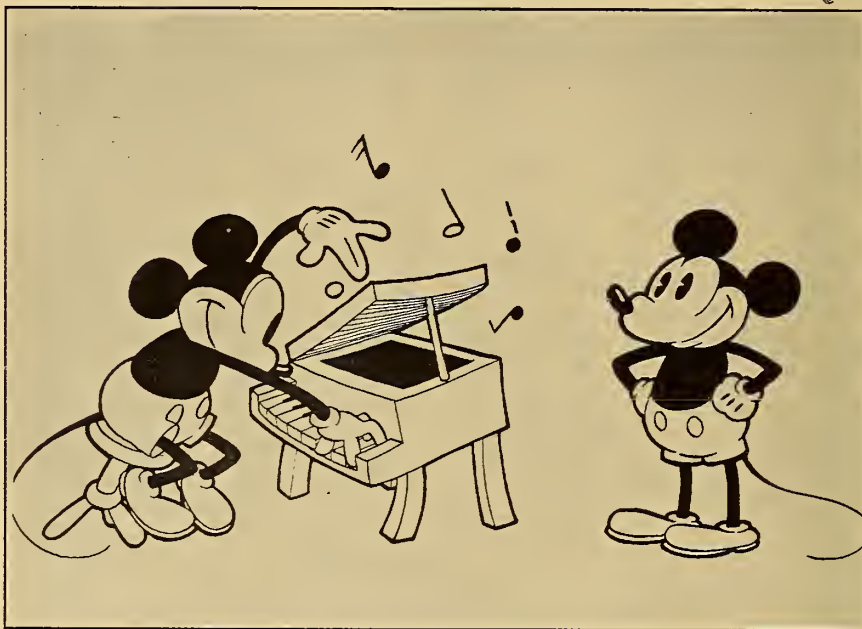
THE greatest part that Will Rogers ever created was that of Will Rogers, public character. On the stage and on the screen, in his writings and his radio talks, he built up a figure unmistakably American, of a type once widely familiar in our native life and literature. It was the type often called the cracker-box philosopher, the Yankee observer and commentator, discussing in homely fashion the affairs of the world with a kind of humorous shrewdness that seemed to multitudes of admirers the complete essence of common sense. Will Rogers, adding an endearing half-shy, half-sly awkwardness to the character, gave it a wider public than it had ever known before, making it a national personage. With his insatiable interest in the world and its doings, he covered the globe with his swift wanderings, associating with easy friendliness with all kinds of people, prominent and obscure, and reporting his findings to his great and faithful American public.

On the screen, whatever story the picture told, he was essentially the same character, growing in ease and mellowness, and increasing in popularity with each new film. All the talk about finding a successor for him is vain—there can be no one to fill a place which was so essentially and personally his own. He was probably the last great public embodiment of those Yankee traits that come to mind when we think of Uncle Sam.

has captured the rhythm of our times. Whereas the theatre still echoes the tradition of the royal courts the motion picture has democratized the auditorium, extending to every spectator the equal privilege of the eye. It carries him, as on a magic carpet, to far-away lands or in turn comes to him in the smallest and most distant hamlet, without ever losing its original quality."

Those everywhere interested in entertainment of excellence will find in this camera version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a film to which they can give unstinted support in the assurance of full value received at the theatres.

Mickey Mouse Celebrates a Birthday



MICKEY MOUSE is now seven years old. And he stands as the one being in time or space who has reached man's estate at so tender an age.

No prattling child is this Mickey. No youngster who is just beginning to make his presence felt to those immediately around him. The stature of Mickey Mouse has something of the colossus about it. His influence extends around the globe.

On September 28—this brain child of Walt Disney celebrated his seventh birthday. For all the things that have happened to Mickey, he might well be seventy. For all the wisdom he has expressed, he might well be as old as Methuselah.

At the age of seven, Mickey Mouse puts to shame all the child prodigies that have ever warmed fond parents' hearts. Infant chess masters and kids who make the grade at Harvard are a mere shadow of Mickey's renown. Mickey Mouse has had more honors showered upon him than many an international or historical hero.

How many youngsters of seven, for example, can claim the distinction of space in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*? How many children can claim recognition by the League of Nations?

Ever since that day in 1928 when Mickey Mouse first came into this world in *Steam-*

boat Willie at the Colony Theatre in New York, the distinctions have been piling up on both Mickey and his master. Diplomas, certificates, medals, cups, statuettes, testimonials—every conceivable type of recognition—have come to them in a steady stream.

The first symbol of this recognition came, strangely enough, in the form of a tail-less cat, sent to Disney by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man. The most recent manifestation, appropriately enough, was the gold medal presented to Disney by the League of Nations last month.

Between these two extremes of time and importance, lies the flood.

Mickey Mouse is responsible for the award of a gold medal to Walt Disney by the American Art Dealers Association, as he is the cause of Disney's election to that select organization of craftsmen, the British Art Workers Guild.

The National Academy of Arts and Letters in Havana presented a special diploma in Mickey's honor. The American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded a gold statuette to Disney on Mickey's account. The Poor Richard Achievement Medal, granted annually to an outstanding American for important deeds done, went to the creator of Mickey.

Mickey Mouse has been a subject for

sculptors and painters throughout the world. He is represented, in one way or another, in the literature of every civilized nation. Even meetings of international statesmen have not gone without the mention of this seven-year-old personality; his name adorns the minutes of more than one such conference.

There is a long and brilliant trail of honor and distinction behind the seven short years that Mickey Mouse has been with us. He has attained a position from which he rules the funnybone of young and old, rich and poor, highbrow and lowbrow, American, English, French, Chinese, Siamese, Indian, African, Australian—people of all stations and all countries.

There is also that long list of incidents which, while not in the nature of formal honors, still emphasizes the importance of Mickey. There was that time when King George of England refused to attend a motion picture performance until he was as-

sured that Mickey Mouse was on the program. There was that occasion when Mickey Mouse, blown up to gigantic size, was utilized to welcome the Normandie after her maiden voyage across the Atlantic.

And, finally, there is the miracle performed by Mickey Mouse. He was on the sound screen at the Manoir Richelieu Casino in Murray Bay, Quebec. In the audience were numerous patients from the Murray Bay Convalescent Home nearby. One patient, according to eye-witnesses, entered the Casino on crutches, navigating the aisles with considerable difficulty. During the Mickey Mouse showing he laid his crutches beneath the seats. For the next half hour he forgot all about his affliction as he laughed at the antics of the famous star. When the show was over, he got up and walked from the theatre, without even a limp, leaving the crutches behind him.

It's now Mickey, the Miracle Mouse.

Fun for the Young from Films and Stories

WE don't believe that there are many boys and girls in this country who would deny that going to the movies is "fun" and from our Young Reviewers' discussions we believe that there are likewise many boys and girls who read for "fun"—not because they have to or are made to—thus the 1935 Book Week theme "Reading for Fun" seems to have more than usual interest for both book-lovers and movie-lovers.

Book Week is to be a seven-day festival, November 17th-23rd, devoted to the enchantment of reading, with children who have already discovered books that absorb and delight them sharing their joy in reading with others who have not yet found out how much sheer fun it is to read. While some boys and girls enjoy reading for information and authors and publishers in recent years have provided very delightful books for this type of young people, the chief emphasis this year, the National Association of Book Publishers, sponsors of Book Week, say will be on the broad field

of imaginative literature, the classics and modern tales of character, of far places, of humor and fantasy. And one can easily see where books and movies could work hand in hand in all these classifications.

When the boys and girls of the Young Reviewers saw *Treasure Island* the general opinion was voiced by a 13-year-old boy who said, "We should have lots more pictures like this taken from books which are not only fun but instructive." A girl of 12 said she had read the book "over and over" and this was the first picture she had ever seen that she felt she could see "over and over." At the review of *Oliver Twist* the movie did not fare so well—21 of those present would rather read the book than see the picture, 17 preferred the classic picturized. The majority thought the picture was not true Dickens. A boy of 15 at the showing of Gene Stratton Porter's *Laddie* felt the producers should take a lesson from this film—"very few books made into pictures follow the book close enough—more should be exactly like the book." A girl of 12 disagreed "I don't think this could be done—in pictures you have to keep looking all the time and with a book you can skip

(Continued on page 14)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Anna Karenina

Adapted by Clemence Dane, Salka Viertel and S. N. Behrman from the novel by Leo Tolstoy, directed by Clarence Brown, photographed by William Daniels, musical score by Herbert Stothart. Produced by David O. Selznick, released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Anna Karenina | Greta Garbo |
| Karenin | Basil Rathbone |
| Sergei | Freddie Bartholomew |
| Vronsky | Fredric March |
| Countess Vronsky | May Robson |
| Stiva | Reginald Owen |
| Dolly | Phoebe Foster |
| Kitty | Maureen O'Sullivan |
| Levin | Gyles Isham |
| Yashvin | Reginald Denny |
| Lili | Joan Marsh |
| Grisha | Buster Phelps |
| Tania | Cora Sue Collins |

THERE is nothing exceptional in Garbo's showing once more that she is a great actress. But it is more than ever true that any film in which she appears is something out of the ordinary. *Anna Karenina*, moreover, quite apart from having Garbo in the title role, has captured rather more of Tolstoy's great novel than might have been expected.

The novel, of course, is pretty long, and embedding the tragic love story by which it is most often remembered is a broad and detailed picture of Czarist Russia, with an immense preoccupation with some of the social problems that more and more concerned Tolstoy as he grew older, particularly the problem of the peasants. The film naturally has no room for these broadly humanitarian and economic questions, and re-creates only as much of the social background as one needs to understand how completely and inevitably the outcome of Anna's

love for Vronsky was determined by forces outside themselves.

For the story is something more than a tale of sin and retribution, old style. Each character, while completely individual, is just as completely a product of class and time and environment. The word "doomed" is used in the dialogue, and though as a word, under the circumstances, it echoes with suggestions of melodrama and mock-heroics, it has this accuracy in it, that it suggests the fatal and inescapable power with which tradition, position and point of view worked upon the Russian aristocracy of the period.

It is in the sketching of these determining forces of "society," worldliness and hypocrisy both universal and local, that the film has an unexpectedly solid basis. The Russianness of it is variable—the only episode completely convincing as Russian is the officers' drinking bout—and the predominance of British accents, combined with Garbo's Scandinavian undertones and an occasional voice unmistakably speaking honest American, give an incongruously international tone to the Czar's elect. But these things are of the surface—they do not hide the essentials beneath them.

With a firm foundation to stand on, Garbo embodies a character of rare depth and beauty, a gentlewoman of charm and poise, radiating a calm and enchanting loveliness, in whom a great passion awakes, stirring up profound emotions and sufferings. She does it so quietly and subtly that you never catch her in the act of working to create an effect. It is as natural and true as if you were being permitted to eavesdrop on a woman in her moments of most complete unconsciousness, so intimately herself

that the make-up box seems a million miles away.

This creation is the soul of the picture, and gives it its whole unity and meaning. Whether or not you are fascinated by Fredric March, Garbo makes you believe that he fascinated Anna, and on that belief the entire structure of the drama depends.

Other actors fill the scene with varying effect, among whom Basil Rathbone, Phoebe Foster, and Constance Collier—in so small a part that the program does not name her—help substantially in building the setting in which Anna's love was so foreordained to tragedy.

J. S. H.



Madeleine Renaud and Paulette Elambert in the French film "La Maternelle"

La Maternelle

From the novel by Leon Frapic, adapted and directed by Jean Benoit-Levy and Marie Epstein; photographed by Georges Asselin; music by Edouard Flament; songs by Alice Verley; American edition by Martin J. Lewis. Produced by Studios Photosonor, Courbevoie; released by John S. Tapernoux in association with Metropolis Pictures.

The cast

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rose | Madeleine Renaud |
| The Superintendent | Alice Tissot |
| Marie | Paulette Elambert |
| Marie's mother | Sylvette Fillacier |
| Mme. Paulin | Mady Berri |
| Dr. Libois | Henry Debain |
| The Professor | Alex Bernard |
| Father Pantin | Ed. van Dee |
| The Inspector | Severin |
| The Teacher | Mariane |
| The Singer | Delille (Opera Comique) |
| M. Antoine | Aman Maistre |

ALTHOUGH hailed for the past year in triple broadsides by the French press, the transatlantic passengers, and the Times correspondent as "tops" for all French films, including René Clair's, *La Maternelle* has only now rid itself of the New York censors in time for the September return to Broadway.

La Maternelle (if it descends on you as *Children of Montmartre* instead, don't let it deceive you) is no film for the children. Its text was originally a Prix Goncourt novel, an award that seems to pepper the French screen of late with the alacrity of a government stamp; and although some of its continental acclaim may be due to the success de scandale incurred by mentioning

Mädchen in Uniform in the same breath, it is closer to being a *Poil de Carrotte* of the sidewalks of Montmartre.

The French, though devoutly cited for their prowess as diplomats, chefs, courtesans, housewives, art vendors, couturiers and as the originators of Amer Picon and the sidewalk cafe, have never been accorded much leeway as arbiters of sentiment without sex. Yet the vein is deep, though it seems casual, and runs from the lachrymose on the one hand to the satiric tight-rope of a René Clair on the other. *La Maternelle*, as a film of mother love by proxy with neither a mammy song nor a little Miss Temple to retrieve it from divorce, falls somewhere between.

It was filmed in a day nursery near Montmartre where the children of the Apaches are beleaguered with fine-combs and showers, with bergerettes and Louis XIV wigs, into learning the facts of life in a classroom while their parents are more picaresquely engaged on the heights. It took months to disarm the children so that they would face the camera without acting (the flea-biting sequence alone delayed them a week—the child refused to scratch).

It is in a way a bare little film, with none of the vibrating surface steel that reinforces the least of Hollywood's epics, or even the technical sleight-of-hand of the early Russians that made Hollywood look to its metronomes. Its style, if you will, is Russian-Victorian, with a suggestion of early Chaplin.

But not since Chaplin and *The Kid* have the movies discovered a child actor with the tragic sensibility of Paulette Elambert as Marie, the stringy little daughter of one of Montmartre's lesser lights of love, who deserts her for a sloe-eyed sneak thief and a boat ride. *La Maternelle* is the maid of all work, with a hidden collegiate past, who proffers affection and a lace collar for the concerts of the cabaret dansant; and it is the threat of her marriage that sends the child to the Seine to try suicide.

This Paulette Elambert is no infant Garbo, but her intensity veins the film. I doubt that Mr. Samuel Goldwyn would take a chance on her, a childish Sappho with a peaked face and little to recommend her to

the casting director but her large eyes, her full and wavering mouth, and a trick of trailing her shoulders when life becomes too much for her.

Without being unduly subjective about it or splaying double and triple exposures and O'Neill pas de seuls about the screen as Duvivier did in the film version of *Poil de Carrotte*, Jean Benoit-Levy and Marie Epstein (the sister of the Jean Epstein who did the French film of *The Fall of the House of Usher*), its directors, have managed to give it the child's point of view of kniving Apaches, ladies-in-waiting and all. It is amazing the way the adults run amuck into relief against the candid eyes and savage humor of the children.

These infant Apaches are shaggy and bilious; they know nothing of "mike" technique, fan mail, gold powder, or Sorbonne French. They swallow pennies, gather lilies from ash barrels, improve their eyelashes without recourse to Max Factor, and sing gravely in the lavabo.

No other film since *The Road to Life* has had the same quality of children being natural among themselves. Not since the silent *Faces of Children*, also French and directed by Jacques Feyder, has a film of children had the same pitch of emotion. *Poil de Carrotte* was a little too bleary self-conscious, *Sans Famille* presented Robert Lynen no longer as the red head, but as Garbo in *Queen Christina*.

La Maternelle is a revolutionary film for France, though its caricatures are imbedded in sentiment at times, and it has no palliative to offer. Yet its satire stems right out of Daumier and Forain via Chaplin and Clair, with another swift tweak at the noses of the petit bourgeois of the school system.

Paulette Elambert is no Shirley Temple; for one thing she has neither dimples nor curls. With none of the glitter of Miss Temple's normalcy she will never usurp Garbo's eminence as our Shirley did Mary Pickford's. But here in this film of Montmartre she conveys in its stead the strange suggestion of passion lightly submerged that is at times more convincing to me than even Miss Bergner's barricade of technique in tragedy, though it be treason to think so.

—E. G.

The New Film Alliance

THE first activity of this recently organized group will be a series of distinguished new films to be shown at the New School of Social Research, 66 West 12th St., New York, beginning with a preview of René Clair's latest picture, "The Last Millionaire," on Sunday, October 6th. The showings will be given every third Sunday, for subscribers and their guests only, and the programs will be selected from the following films, not yet exhibited in America, in their uncut form: the French version of Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment"; the French version with Harry Bauer of "Les Misérables," in 27 reels; the Czechoslovakian comedy "Peter"; the Russian "The New Gulliver," a feature length animated film with only one actor; the Marcel Pagnole productions, "Toni" and "Angele"; Dovjenko's new film "Air City"; "La Fusée" with Fermin Gernier; "Marie," a Hungarian film by Paul Fejos, director of "The Last Moment"; Joris Ivens' film of the Belgian coal fields, "Borinage"; the Soviet film "Women"; Jules Romain's satire, "Dr. Knock"; and "Amok," Ozep's thrilling film of the East.

Information about subscriptions, and about the purpose and plans of the organization, may be obtained from The New Film Alliance, Inc., 110 West 40th St., New York City.

Awards at Venice

THE Third Venice Cinema Exhibition was held this past August. For three seasons now cinema exhibition has been a part of the Venice Biennial Art Exhibition. The awards in this international display of film productions are of interest to the American motion picture public as many of them went to American films.

The special prize given for the most artistic foreign film of the year went to the Columbia Picture *No Greater Glory*, adapted from Ferenc Molnar's novel, "The Paul Street Boys." This film received high praise from the National Board when shown to its Committees in the spring of 1934. It was rated as an exceptional picture, one, as our critic wrote in his review,* that is exciting and moving and has the rare quality

* April 1934.

of being able to stir up discussion. The main plot is the war for a lumberyard playground conducted by two groups of boys in Budapest.

Other awards were the Mussolini Cup for the best foreign film of the year to *Anna Karenina*, which is reviewed in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of this magazine on page 10. The Gold Medal of the Italian Confederation of Professional Men and Artists, for the best cartoon went to *The Band Concert*, and certainly there is no quarrel with this decision, as this film was a star selection of the Board Committee, with special reference made to the unusually clever use of music. This award served as a present for the birthday of Mickey Mouse described elsewhere in this magazine. The Government Motion Picture Bureau's Cup for the best direction went to King Vidor for *The Wedding Night*. The direction of this film had caused our critic to praise it as "remarkably well done and not only interesting but true to life." The cup for the best color film was awarded to *Becky Sharp*. This handsome production in Technicolor had received special comment by our reviewer on its use of the new medium.

(Continued from page 4)

highly specialized in the educational field. It is called by the title *The Human Adventure* and grows directly out of the researches and explorations of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The picture carries the audience by airplane through the lands where civilization first arose—Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Anatolia, Iraq and Persia. The subject is so well presented that the film is at all times entertaining and it is absolutely "professor-proof," as it was made under the supervision of Dr. James H. Breasted, director of the Institute.

Motion picture councils, colleges, churches and other educational and cultural groups can with advantage sponsor showings of it knowing they are bringing something well worth while to the community and something that cannot be seen in the theatres. Details regarding booking can be secured from Mr. Wendell G. Shields, 1270 Sixth Avenue, New York City. New York and vicinity residents can see it at Carnegie Hall October 29th and 30th where the initial New York showing is to be held.

Book-Films

(Continued from page 9)

pages" but she was informed in no uncertain terms by the young gentleman that "I never skip pages. I don't think it would take anything away from either the picture or the book to make them exactly alike. When you have read a book you like to go see how other people have figured them out." A girl agreed with this young man saying, "When you have particularly liked a book you want to go see the picture to see what they have done to it—that was the main reason I wanted to see *The Count of Monte Cristo* so much."

Movies profit by book-films and films profit by book adaptations in the boys and girls opinions—a young lady of 12 felt that if she hadn't read the book "Alice in Wonderland" she would not have enjoyed the picture very much. A boy of 10 liked *Anne of Green Gables* because he had read it or "at least it was read to us in school." The lad leading the Young Reviewers discussion at *David Copperfield* asked "How many who have not read the book want to read it now and why?"—a boy of 13 wanted "to contrast the book and picture to see if the book could possibly be half as good as the picture" and this seemed to be the general reason of all who had not read the book. A girl of 12 had just finished reading "David"—"they followed it very closely—I don't believe anything was changed. I think it was one of the best if not the best picture I've ever seen in my life." Not a single person who had read the book was disappointed in the film.

In the National Board's work with children they have come to the conclusion that what boys and girls in general want above all else in movies is adventure and with books and movies to draw from for their adventures "what fun" there is for all.

As for many years the National Board will publish a list of Selected Book-Films for Book Week. It will be a long listing as many fine films have been made from fine books this past year. The cost of the list is 10c and it is available from the Board or from the National Association of Book Publishers.

A Junior Study Course

THE National Board of Review has experimented in its Junior Review Committee with 600 boys and girls in New York City during the past four years and now it plans to interest young people all over the country during the coming winter. To do this it has developed what one journalist calls "a short and painless motion picture appreciation course" to be used with boys' and girls' community club groups and in schools.

The method is that of informal discussion groups led by an interested adult for leader, chosen by the children's group, or by one of the youngsters themselves with an adult acting as guide or counselor.

A monthly discussion outline to be used by the leader in charge is available at a nominal charge, containing material from this magazine and other publications and sources. The following subjects comprise the course:

October—"What are your favorite movies?"

November—"Do you ever shop for movies?"

December—"What the Young Reviewers of the National Board say about the films of 1935."

January—"Distinguishing movie advertising from reviewing."

February—"Who are the movie directors?"

March—"How important are actors and actresses?"

April—"Making your own movies."

May—"Current films."

SELECTED PICTURES

(Continued from page 2)

racketeer who was a thorough public menace, through his income tax invasions. Aside from the motivation it is typical gangster melodrama, fast, vivid and exciting. *Mature.*

STORM OVER THE ANDES—*Jack Holt, Antonio Moreno, Mona Barrie. Screen story by Eliot Gibbons. Directed by Christy Cabanne. Universal, 9 reels.* A cocky soldier-of-fortune aviator offers his services to Bolivia during the Chaco trouble and some of his adventures give this picture thrilling moments. The old-time favorite, Antonio Moreno, is a welcome addition to the cast. *Family.*

STREAMLINE EXPRESS—*Victor Jory, Evelyn Venable. Screen story by Wellyn Totman. Directed by Leonard Fields. Mascot, 7 reels.* Although this picture starts slowly it picks up speed in interest and becomes quite an amusing comedy—the scene is laid on a new streamline train during its record transcontinental run and the plot concerns a producer, his runaway star, her fiancée, a crook and several others. *Mature.*

SUPERSPEED—*Norman Foster, Florence Rice, Mary Carlisle. Screen story by Harold Shumate. Directed by Lambert Hillyer. Columbia, 6 reels.* Entertaining comedy drama about an ex-football hero who invents a device for speeding up motors. *Family.*

SWEDENHEIMS—*Gösta Ekman, Tutta Rolf, Karin Swanström. From play by Hjalmar Bergman. Directed by Gustaf Molander. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, 8 reels.* Comedy about a scientist who is a candidate for the Nobel Prize, and a family disgrace that threatens to deprive him of it. Excellently acted and photographed. All Swedish dialogue. *Family.*

THROWBACK, THE—*Buck Jones. Screen story by Cherry Wilson. Directed by Ray Taylor. Universal, 6 reels.* Slightly different story for a Western, excellent photography and beautiful riding make this an entertaining picture. The son of a cattle rustler returns home years later and is shunned by everyone until he proves his true worth. *Family. Junior matinee.*

THUNDER IN THE NIGHT—*Edmund Lowe, Karen Morley and Paul Cavanaugh. From play "A Woman Lies" by Ladislaus Fodor. Directed by George Archibaud. Fox, 7 reels.* Mystery and intrigue in Budapest, with Edmund Lowe suavely and cleverly solving the problems. Handsome production. *Mature.*

TOGETHER WE LIVE—*Willard Mack, Ben Lyon, Sheila Manners. Screen story and direction by Willard Mack. Columbia, 7 reels.* A Civil War veteran leads his comrades from the old soldiers' home to break up a crowd of so-called workers who are plotting to blow up the town. Propaganda against Reds, based on the assumption that all labor troubles are caused by foreign agitators, which makes it superficial as well as violently prejudiced. *Family.*

TRIUMPH OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE—*Arthur Wontner. From novel "Valley of Fear" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Directed by Leslie S. Hiscott. First Division, 8 reels.* The great detective goes into retirement but emerges when a crime is committed in which he sees the hand of his old enemy, Moriarty, and he solves the mystery with his usual suave skill. British production. *Family.*

TWO SINNERS—*Otto Kruger, Martha Sleeper, Minna Gombell. From novel "Two Black Sheep" by Warwick Deeping. Directed by Arthur Lubin. Republic Productions, 7 reels.* The romance laid in Nice, of an English governess and a man who has been in prison. Rather heavy but relieved by an imp of a child and Martha Sleeper's splendid acting. *Family.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel unless otherwise marked)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

- ***BASKETBALL TECHNIQUE**—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.* Unusually good exposition of the game. *Junior.*
- BEACH MASTERS** (Struggle to Live Series)—*RKO-Radio.* Life among the seals.
- CAMERA THRILLS**—*Universal, 2 reels.* Large doses of thrilling and horrible newsreel shots with Graham McNamee explaining the hazardous work of the cameraman.
- HOOKED LIGHTNING** (Spotlight Series)—*Paramount.* Exciting fishing in southern waters.
- JOLLY OL' LONDON** (Easy Aces Series)—*RKO-Radio.* Easy Aces see travelogue of London.
- ***MARCH OF TIME NO. 6, THE**—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Coal-mine bootleggers in Pennsylvania; life in the CCC camps; glimpses of Ethiopia.
- ***MOROCCO MIRAGE** (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox.* Beautiful and interesting scenic. *Junior.*
- NEPTUNE MYSTERIES** (Struggle to Live Series)—*RKO-Radio.* Fine scenes of under-sea life. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Junior.*
- NIGHT LIFE OF EUROPE** (Adventures of a Newsreel Cameraman Series)—*Fox.* Shows and cabarets of European capitals.
- ROYAL WEDDING, THE**—*Scandinavian, 3 reels.* A superlatively good newsreel of the wedding of the Princess Ingrid of Sweden and the Crown Prince of Denmark, including a royal banquet. No English titles.
- TENSE MOMENTS**—*Columbia.* Exciting climaxes in various sports.
- TRICKS OF THE TRADES** (Easy Aces Series)—*RKO-Radio.* Mr. and Mrs. Ace see a film showing how people are tricked.

CARTOONS

- BIRD SCOUTS** (Rainbow Parade Series)—*RKO-Radio.* The birds vanquish their enemy, the cat. *Junior.*
- FOX AND THE RABBIT, THE** (Cartune Classic Series)—*Universal.* Color cartoon about how a disobedient little Peter Rabbit learned his lesson—well. *Junior.*
- HUNTING SEASON, THE** (Rainbow Parade Series)—*RKO-Radio.* Very amusing—how a cow routs a hunter and saves her two duck friends. *Junior.*
- LADY IN RED, THE** (Merrie Melody Series)—*Vitaphone.* The roaches and their gay times in the kitchen. *Junior.*
- MICKEY'S FIRE BRIGADE** (Mickey Mouse Series)—*United Artists.* Noisier and less clever than most of this series but still better than most of its kind. *Junior.*
- PLUTO'S JUDGMENT DAY** (Mickey Mouse Series)—*United Artists.* Pluto's punishment for chasing cats. *Junior.*
- SCOTTY FINDS A HOME** (Rainbow Parade Series)—*RKO-Radio.* How a Scotty who drives off a tramp wins himself a home. *Junior.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

- ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY, THE** (Serial) NOS. 1-3—*Rex, King of Wild Horses, Rin-Tin-Tin, Jr. Mascot, 2 reels each.* A good exciting serial with Rex and Rinty protecting each other when a band of villains tries to take them away from the master they love. *Junior.*
- ALIBI RACKET, THE** (Crime Docs Not Pay Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* How a man with a perfect alibi defied the law for a long time.
- ALIMONY ACHES**—*Columbia, 2 reels.* An amusing Andy Clyde farce, with a lot of funny old-time slapstick.
- ALL AMERICAN DRAWBACK**—*Vitaphone.* Edgar Bergen, ventriloquist, in amusing act.
- BORRAH MINNEVITCH AND HIS HARMONICA RASCALS.**—*Vitaphone.* Excellent harmonica music.
- COUNSELITIS**—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Leon Errol in a very funny burlesque of the courts.
- GREAT AIR MYSTERY, THE** (Serial) NOS. 1-2—*Clark Williams, Noah Beery, Jr. Universal, 2 reels each.* Unusually well done and exciting serial involving the aerial adventures of a young aviator and his cameraman. Based on the comic-strip "Tailspin Tommy." *Junior.*
- JOHNNY GREEN AND HIS ORCHESTRA**—*Vitaphone.* Snappy music.
- MAJOR BOWES THEATRE OF THE AIR NOS. 1-2**—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels each.* Scenes from the popular amateur hour.
- ROMANCE OF THE WEST**—*Vitaphone, 2 reels.* Singing, dancing and wild west stunts against beautiful scenery, in technicolor.
- STARS OF TOMORROW NO. 2**—*Columbia.* Another group of amateurs, with N. T. G. as master of ceremonies, better than the usual thing of its kind.
- SYMPHONY IN BLACK**—*Paramount.* Duke Ellington and his orchestra playing excellent music.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

| | |
|---|----------|
| National Board of Review Magazine (monthly) | |
| \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions | |
| \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups | |
| Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures | |
| \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine | |
| Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) | 25c |
| Work of the National Board of Review (hooklet) | free |
| Special film lists | each 10c |
| Junior Matinee Films | |
| Foreign Films | |
| Educational Films | |
| Selected Book-Films | |
| Films on Subjects of Timely Interest | |
| Exceptional Photoplays | |
| Musical Films | |

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Mickey Rooney, the Puck of "Midsummer Night's Dream" (page 12)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AFFAIR OF SUSAN, THE—ZaSu Pitts, Hugh O'Connell. Screen story by Mann Page. Directed by Kurt Neumann. Universal, 7 reels. The old film *Lonesome* remade with new players in the roles of two lonesome people who meet at Coney Island. Simply and tenderly told. Family.

BAD BOY—James Dunn, Dorothy Wilson. Screen story by Vina Delmar. Directed by John Blystone. Twentieth Century-Fox, 6 reels. Human and unpretentious little love story of a fellow with loafing inclinations and a girl whose parents are looking for an industrious son-in-law. Family.

BARBARY COAST—Miriam Hopkins, Edward G. Robinson, Joel McCrea. Screen story by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Directed by Howard Hawkes. United Artists, 10 reels. Expert melodrama of San Francisco in gold rush days, centering around a gambler, a girl and a young poet. The director has given a lively, colorful background to the story, which has several unusually effective sequences. Excellent photography. Mature.

CASE OF THE MISSING MAN, THE—Roger Pryor, Joan Perry. Screen story by Lee Loeb and Harold Bushman. Directed by D. Ross Lederman. Columbia, 6 reels. Novel idea, excitingly presented, of a street photographer who happens to "snap" a mysterious criminal much to the latter's annoyance. Family.

CHARLIE CHAN IN SHANGHAI—Warner Oland. Screen story by Edward T. Lowe and Gerard Fairlie. Directed by James Tinling. Twentieth Century-Fox, 7 reels. Charlie uncovers an international opium smuggler, with a lot of interesting melodrama. Family.

CONFIDENTIAL—Donald Cook, Evelyn Knapp. Screen story by John Rathmell and Scott Darling. Directed by Edward L. Cahn. Mascot 7 reels. Adventures of a Department of Justice agent in finding the man higher up in a big gambling racket. Good melodrama. Family.

CRIME OF DR. CRESPI, THE—Erich von Stroheim, Harriet Russell. Suggested by Edgar Allen Poe's "The Premature Burial." Directed by John H. Auer. Republic, 6 reels. Gripping horror picture, providing good entertainment for those who like the type, about a famous surgeon's gruesome revenge on his hated rival. Mature.

DANCE BAND—Buddy Rogers, June Clyde. Screen story by Roger Burford, Jack Davis, Jr. and Denis Waldock. Directed by Marcel Varnel. First Division, 6 reels. Pleasant musical entertainment about a band leader's pursuit of a girl who conducts a rival orchestra. British production. Family.

DIVINE SPARK, THE—Phillipps Holmes, Marta Eggcrth. Screen story by Walter Reisch. Directed by Carmine Gallone. Gaumont-British, 8 reels. The romance of Bellini, the Italian composer, and the love that brought him fame. Picturesque, with actual Neapolitan settings, and a lot of music. British production. For schools and libraries. Family.

***DR. SOCRATES**—Paul Muni, Ann Dvorak. Screen story by W. R. Burnett. Directed by William Dieterle. Warner, 6 reels. Vivid picture of contemporary life, a small town terrorized by a kind of Dillinger, and a surgeon compelled to treat the wounded criminals. Excellent scenario and acting, and unusually good setting with lifelike minor characters. Exciting and clever plot. Family.

EAGLE'S BROOD, THE—Bill Boyd, Jimmy Ellison. Novel by Clarence Mulford. Directed by Howard Bretherton. Paramount, 7 reels. The second of the Hopalong Cassidy series—Western that gets away from the usual rut of plot. This one has the great novelty of dispensing completely with any suggestion of love story. Family.

FEATHER IN HER HAT, A—Pauline Lord, Basil Rathbone, Louis Hayward. Novel by I. A. R. Wylie. Directed by Alfred Santell. Columbia, 8 reels. Story of a poor shopowner's success in raising her son to be a gentleman. Excellent, restrained acting by the entire cast make it an immensely moving and appealing picture. Family.

FORBIDDEN HEAVEN—Charles Farrell, Charlotte Henry. Screen story by Christian Jope-Slade. Directed by Reginald Bond. Republic, 6 reels. The adventures of four homeless people who find temporary shelter in a park, and for a short time live in a world of their own. Family.

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Dr. William B. Tower

IT is the sad duty of the National Board of Review to report the death of its Treasurer, Dr. William B. Tower. Dr. Tower was for many years a member of the Executive Committee, Chairman from 1923 to 1930, and was at the time of his death Chairman of the Membership Committee.

No one in the history of the Board served with more earnestness and acceptance of responsibility, or with a finer concept of duty and loyalty than did its late Treasurer. As far as the activities of his own busy work permitted, his time was at the disposal of the affairs of the Board. His knowledge of the details of its work, and his long personal acquaintance and association with the members of its various committees, local and afield, gave his counsel and his share of guidance a special value. His word was wise, his heart was generous, and his mind was liberal and of today. Indeed, he was among the first of the clergy who discerned the potentialities of the motion picture medium, never lost

faith in it, spoke with authority concerning it, won other religious leaders over to it, and defended it from censorship to the last. One of his last fine efforts for the Board was to lead the fight at Albany a year ago in support of the Brownell bill to abolish censorship of the screen in New York State. Another of his most recent vital interests was in the planned work of the Board to establish the rights of youth to a say in a medium of human expression so important to modern youth's own time, and to make parents and older people conscious of the facts, rather than mere suppositions, concerning the reactions of young people to motion pictures.

The National Board of Review is proud of his record as a member and one of the leaders of the organization. It is certain that all who came to know him in the long time of his service, remained happy in the friendly association. His spirit possessed a fine sense of honor that communicated itself to others and left what he touched in the actions of groups honorable in purpose



Dr. William B. Tower

and execution. He had no use for cant, no use for strategy that lacked openness and directness. He wanted nothing for himself except the assurance that the service he was prepared to give was worth the effort; and he wished much for others. His long activity with the Board, his faithfulness, and unswerving belief in it constitute one of its finest testimonials. And to him the Board

records its testimonial of his fine worth.

Following his retirement from the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he accepted the pastorate of the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church at Mount Vernon, New York, which he occupied at the time of his death. Full biographical data is to be found in this Magazine of February 1935.

The Motion Picture and Music

By DOUGLAS MOORE

Associate Professor, Department of Music Columbia University

Those assembled at the 1935 Conference of the National Board greeted with marked interest Professor Moore's presentation of the subject of music and the motion picture and we are therefore pleased to reprint here at length from his article appearing in the July issue of Harpers Magazine on the same subject, with the addition of further paragraphs from Professor Moore in his continued interest and study of the music of the cinema. Musical composition, as well as study and teaching, receives Professor Moore's attention. His principal orchestral works are "Pageant of P. T. Barnum," "Symphony of Autumn," "Overture on an American Tune," and he has written incidental music for plays both Shakespearean and modern.

FROM the time of the earliest public performances of moving pictures the relationship with music has been regarded as important. In the days of the Nickelodeon the assisting pianist was a picturesque feature of all picture programs. With fingers which seemed to defy all principles of wear and tear, he or she played from opening to closing with one eye on the screen and the other often on a novel reposing on the lap. The nature of the selections performed depended upon the temperament and experience of the performer. The young lady pianist usually played the latest rag-time, methodically going through the stack of music on the piano rack only to interrupt this with occasional realistic touches to complement such dramatic scenes as falling off cliffs, custard pie warfare and the inevitable chase by the police. For a death scene she played "When I Lost You" and for sadness she turned to "Hearts and Flowers." The man pianist who was usually an ex-piano teacher of German extraction,

played more solid fare, minor salon pieces of the nineteenth century, but he too was not unmindful of the dramatic possibilities to which he would occasionally respond with improvisation. Can the aging pioneer public of the movies ever forget the sinister staccato theme which was universally played for the villain's entrance?

When the converted shop was replaced by the movie palace the pipe organ with its gaudy glories was substituted for the friendly piano. Let us not stop here to bewail the influence of the movie upon our organists and our respect for the instrument. Church music drew closer to the theatre all during the nineteenth century and it was only natural that the movies should carry the cheapening process further. The effect of the organ on the movies, however, was not altogether bad. Further attempts were made by imaginative performers to bring the music closer to the material of the screen. In general the musical value of the performance was better.

The next step in expansion was the incorporation of the movie orchestra. This usually excellent body of players performed an overture and accompanied for at least a part of the time the projection of the picture. This led to the demand for especially composed music to circulate with the picture. The music was so arranged as to synchronize with the effects of the picture and to emphasize its dramatic points. When the orchestra was in recess, a transcription of the special score was played with varying effectiveness by the organist.

An early example of effective combination of music and screen was *The Birth of a Nation*, for which I believe David Wark Griffith himself arranged the music. The score was only partly original, but the symphonic and operatic quotations were not over familiar, the songs were well chosen, and the dramatic effects were well arranged. Anyone who recalls this picture will remember the important part which the musical score played in its success.

Later on several good composers were called in to write original music for important films. Some of these scores proved to be excellent. I can recall the music for *The Thief of Bagdad*, which was written by Mortimer Wilson. This music was all original and it was good enough for subsequent quotation on orchestral-concert programs. It almost looked for a time as if an important new outlet was to be found for music and that the film music drama might replace the traditional grand opera.

When the sound film arrived upon the scene great changes took place in the musical situation. Theatre orchestras were disbanded, to be replaced by the artistically inferior but infinitely cheaper sound apparatus. The first effect of this was to create an unemployment situation among orchestra musicians which is one of the grave economic problems of today. The recording process, at first imperfect, lowered the musical standards but made possible an exact musical accompaniment for the film at all performances, in outlying small theatres as well as in the motion picture "cathedrals."

This brought about two important results. First, the principle of an accompanying score was universally established. Second, the mass production of so much music resulted in the loss of quality and established the musical hack in the studio in place of the composer with something to say. Musical scores, which in the days of the theatre orchestra had often been of some artistic merit, now became perfunctory and flat. Occasionally something of interest appeared such as *Tabu*, with an arranged score by Hugo Riesenfeld; but the average product was as mechanical as the instrument which displayed it.

At this point speech and song were added

to the screen. After a preliminary skirmish or two with such offerings as Martinelli singing the "Lament from Pagliacci" for a movie short, the directorial genius hit upon the theme song, one of the most annoying phenomena that has ever plagued a long suffering public. Each picture had to have one of these bobbing up in the course of the picture. A new impetus was given to the tin pan alley publishers and with characteristic enthusiasm they plugged their offerings until the situation had become absurd. Mr. Edward Marks in his entertaining book on the song business "They All Sang" describes the final debacle with a song quaintly entitled "Woman Disputed, I Love You" which was immediately parodied in a Broadway revue by the gleefully received, "Hammacher Schlemmer, I Love You." Shortly after this, the theme song idea quietly expired.

The first talkies undoubtedly stimulated the waning movie business. In spite of the fact that the art of photographic pantomime had been steadily progressing and had culminated in such fine pictures as *The Last Laugh* and *The Big Parade*, audiences were on the decline. Here was a novelty to bring them back. Lovers of the cinema art however deplored the fact that the new technique resulted in an abandonment of most of the artistic gains which had been made by the films. Speech was a poor substitute for the delights of the eye, especially speech as recorded and synchronized in the early offerings. Stage works, both dramatic and musical, were bodily transplanted to the screen and producers forgot that the essence of the medium was visual. The early musical comedies were unsuccessful and were abandoned. Hollywood was deserted by the musicians and the directors were compelled to pioneer in a new field, that of unaccompanied dialogue.

Fortunately, the public love of novelty carried the picture business through the difficult days of experimentation. Meanwhile Hollywood gradually discovered that stage directors and actors hastily imported from Broadway were not necessarily the ones to succeed in the new medium. The old silent performers rushed to the elocution studios to learn how to speak. The directors bided

their time and waited for a return to the old conditions. Meanwhile a new group of directors, some from Europe and some native, experimented with the photographic dialogued medium and gradually discovered ways of salvaging some of the successful features of the old silent films. It is interesting to note that the tendency in the past year or two has been toward more and more pantomime and less dialogue. The idea of visual flow has been rediscovered, the magic of photography has been at least partly restored, and we are now receiving examples of greatly improved pictures. The taste of the public appears to be improving. Even the clean-up of morals has served to better the quality of the pictures from an artistic point of view, much to the surprise of many. It has been discovered that the new art of the film can much more successfully reproduce the novel than can the stage. Furthermore the public appears to be delighted. The long-awaited educational contribution of the cinema seems to be actually under way.

What is the situation with regard to music? Has the ground lost in the talkie revolution been regained? The answer is, unfortunately only in part. On the one hand sound recording and performance have been greatly improved since the early days. The music that we hear is better played and a more palatable substitute for the vanished theatre orchestra. The return to favor of the screen musical comedy and the more imaginative treatment of the medium have resulted in a very superior type of popular operetta and revue. Hollywood has been able to attract our best popular composers and is not content with reproducing Broadway successes, but provides musical shows conceived for the special medium of the motion picture.

The cartoon comedies, especially the Silly Symphonies of Walt Disney, have made excellent use of accompanying music. Sometimes this takes the form of little songs, like the vastly entertaining *Big Bad Wolf*, sometimes it is a parody of familiar music such as the "William Tell" Overture in *The Band Concert*. Most critics will agree that Disney is one of the most original contributors to the new art of the motion picture, and his

use of music is no less original and delightful.

But, on the other hand, what of the serious musical accompaniment to screen comedies and dramas that was so promising in the old days of the silent films? This was replaced by spoken dialogue. Dialogue spoken to musical accompaniment has never been very satisfactory, and although the increasing use of pantomime affords space for music which could be telling and of interpretative value, few directors have taken advantage of this opportunity. You will notice that although in many of the more pretentious films there is a musical background it seldom achieves distinction. In fact, the persons who are called upon to furnish this music are the studio orchestra leaders, who are not composers at all. They either cull symphonic and operatic flowers from their garden of memories or, like Burbank, produce synthetic fruits and blossoms which resemble these by the grafting process. Except for the talented song writers, Hollywood has no interest as yet in the creative composer. I do not know a single instance when a composer of prominence has been called upon in the films in this country. Abroad the situation is slightly better. Incidental music has been written for the films by Richard Strauss, Florent Schmitt, Arthur Honegger, and other accomplished composers. René Clair with his two very successful films, *Le Million* and *A Nous la Liberté*, provided an excellent and witty accompaniment from the pen of George Auric, a French composer of international prominence. These pictures demonstrated the value of a good musical accompaniment to comedy. Frank Tuttle in a Paramount picture borrowed some of this technique, and used a clever musical accompaniment by a studio composer of talent. So far as I know, no serious music has been composed here for a dramatic picture.

Aside from the obvious truth that if the musical contribution to a picture is to be effective it must be fresh and deeply felt, there are other reasons why the perfunctory hack musical score is unsatisfactory. Familiar music lifted from its context carries with it its original associations. Perhaps the movie directors think that "The Ride of the

Valkyries" or the opening of the "Fourth Symphony" of Brahms are unfamiliar to a majority of their publics, and therefore serve very nicely for their purposes, but in these days of frequent performances of operatic and symphonic music over national broadcasts this is a dangerous assumption. Any recognition of familiar music lifted from its context provides a distraction, not an enhancement to the scene in question. But even worse than the overworked masterpiece is the tired, derivative music which the hack furnishes from his own pen. Anyone who is at all susceptible to music—and most people are even if unconsciously—revolts from such animated musical cadavers. An example of the studio creative art may be cited in the nauseous fanfares which accompany the blurbs about coming attractions. Here at any rate is a fitting accompaniment to the windy superlatives and empty overstatement of the Hollywood advertising technique.

The theatre, which in this country and Europe has never realized the possibilities of music to the extent that the Chinese, for example, do, nevertheless has at one time or another called upon such composers for incidental music as Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Berlioz, Bizet, Mendelssohn, Grieg, Tchaikowsky, Elgar, Holst, Honegger and Hindemith. How sensible it would be of a young, wealthy and ambitious art like the contemporary motion picture to attract to its development the competent, talented composers that America is revealing today. It would seem all the more logical in view of the fact that the contemporary film technique would allow so much opportunity for musical distinction, much more in fact than the theatre could ever do. Another advantage which the film has over the theatre in incidental music is the comparative cheapness of providing the music. No play producer could afford a symphony orchestra for each performance of his play but thanks to the excellence of modern recording, the film could offer a symphony orchestra and a great chorus without turning a hair. The great American public is certainly fond of music. Whether it will ever support opera nationally is open to question. What could be more appropriate for the development

of the dramatic instincts of our composers than the young and typically American art of the motion picture?

Incidental music has three great contributions to make to the play or the picture; unity, atmosphere, and enhancement of dramatic values. The first is suggested by Wagner's idea of tone speech. He says: "The great value of the orchestra is its power of uttering the unspeakable. It may do this in three ways—by its organic alliance with gesture, by bringing up the remembrance of an emotion when the singer is not giving voice to it, and by giving a foreboding of words as yet unspoken." The identification of persons or emotions with definite musical ideas may be carried occasionally to annoying lengths in the Wagner music dramas, but when he succeeds as in Siegfried's "Funeral March" in recalling all the previous material relating to the hero, the poignancy of the funeral procession is enormously increased. The theory behind the theme song was not so much at fault as the quality of the music and the over-obviousness of its repetition. A nostalgic bit of music linked with a romantic character can be made very appealing to an audience. Wagner's idea of the foreboding of events to come was not developed even in his own works very extensively. It is nevertheless full of possibilities. There was an interesting instance of this in the musical accompaniment to *Chapayev* which impressed me as being extraordinarily good. The scene was concerned with the night attack on the Red army by a greatly outnumbering White army. The sympathies of the audience had been enlisted in the cause of the Reds. We saw first the peacefully sleeping camp of the Reds and then the galloping cavalry of the Whites. The music which accompanied the latter was not realistic, the imitation hoof beats which one would have expected, it was not even exciting, it was sad. The audience knew that the gallant commander and his band were going to be wiped out in the attack and the music with rare sympathy predicted the disaster. This was a case not of identification because the music was new, but of prediction of mood and I found it very touching.

The contribution of music to atmosphere

is almost too apparent to mention. Not only place but period can be suggested powerfully by the character of the music. *Berkeley Square* for instance revealed the heroine playing the harpsichord, and it actually was a harpsichord if sight and sound may be trusted. Even though the average audience might not recognize the instrument, there would be unconscious recognition of something belonging to another age, something very beautiful and strange. In the excellent *What Every Woman Knows* the Wylie family was shown grouped around a very tinny piano singing "Loch Lomond." It was charmingly done, just the right quality of untrained voices and earnestness.

The danger of correlation between music and drama is in taking titles at their face value. There is the classic story of the public school music and history project when for the story of the burning of Rome the music selected was a dashing piano piece of "The Maiden's Prayer" type, written about fifty years ago and called "The Burning of Rome." The music of the carefully prepared Greek Games at Barnard College used to be selected from the very eighteenth-century classic operas of Gluck. The result was more Viennese than Athenian. Here is where the composer is safer to trust than the arranger. For purposes of musical association if the real article is not available, that is, the actual music of the place and period, it is better to trust the imagination of the creative artist than to pin one's faith in titles. As a rule however, Hollywood manages the atmospheric use of music quite well and there are many instances of excellent effects.

It is in the enhancement of dramatic values that we get to the real heart of the matter. The greatest sensitiveness and skill are necessary to effect a proper combination between situation and music. There are two types of combination in general, realistic and expressionistic. While the former has some uses it also leads to abuses and a literalness that is a positive handicap to the scene. You will remember that when sound was first used in pictures the sound apparatus exultantly recorded every door slamming, every footstep, and all the trivial noises that ordinarily escape the attention. All these were distorted so that they came as

a shock to the audience, and when we had ceased to wonder at the apparatus which recorded them, we resented their intrusion upon the story because they were irrelevant. Directors soon learned that literalness in sound was as dangerous as in photography. The artistic process is always the selective one.

Now it is undeniably true that music can imitate many noises and physical actions. Composers of the nineteenth century explored the possibilities of musical story telling by means of these imitative effects and the result was the symphonic poem. Even Bach did not feel superior to descriptive effects in his music, as his choral preludes and many cantatas attest. But the symphonic poem and the music of Bach did not give us imitation alone. The musical values were there and the underlying emotional feeling. Realistic music raises some of the same problems that recorded sound did in the early days. The selective process must be used by the artist. An imitative effect may be made part of the scene and of the emotion which should accompany it but it easily may prove to be a distraction when not sensitively related to the underlying dramatic values. One of the best uses of realistic incidental music was strictly speaking not music at all—the drum beats in Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones*. These beats were supposed to come from the gathering pursuit, but in their increasing frequency and volume they were more than this—a symbol of the approaching nemesis of the ex-pullman porter. It is quite conceivable that an imitative sound of nature might set the key for a whole scene and that a fine accompaniment might be built upon it, but the occasional glissando to indicate a fall or muted trombone to indicate a laugh or flute trill to indicate a bird are more often than not a distraction.

Expressionistic music seizes upon the underlying dramatic idea and enhances it by its eloquence. The power of music over the imagination is probably greater than that of any other medium of expression. Properly conceived it is a magnificent aid to any form of dramatic projection. At its best it should pass almost unnoticed but should add to the emotional reaction of the audience uncon-

sciously. For this reason it is important that music with other and different associations should never be used. Banal music such as the studio hack usually gives us detracts from our pleasure but bizarre music would be almost worse. It is probably true however that audiences can assimilate a degree of originality and modernity in combination with the drama that could not be tolerated by itself. Above all the music must be deeply felt by the composer and must be absolutely sincere. Such conviction on the part of the artist will usually carry conviction and understanding to an audience.

A recent production made by RKO seems to indicate that the American producer is becoming more aware of the importance of incidental music in the cinema. *The Informer*, one of the most effective pictures ever made in Hollywood, has an excellent musical score by Max Steiner which is imaginative and effective. Although the music can not lay any claim to great originality, most of it is so right in the situations where it appears, that its contribution to the success of the picture is indubitable.

Max Steiner, according to an article in the New York Times of recent date, was formerly a movie organist in New York. He rebelled against the dullness of the music arrangements sent to accompany one of the pictures and was inspired to make his own. This proved to be so effective with the audience that he decided to make a career of it. He is now musical director for RKO where his services are evidently much appreciated.

The music of *The Informer* often makes the mistake of a too great literalness such as commonplace descriptive effects when Gypo rips off the poster from the billboard or when he tosses four coins on the table. Other moments of the action where the mood is eloquently expressed more than compensate for these. I was particularly impressed with the music which follows Frankie's departure from the restaurant. Gypo's dark thoughts of betrayal are indicated by a passage of low thirds on the woodwinds. Best of all is the music at the wake. Here a tenor voice sings "The Minstrel Boy" accompanied by some harmony of women's voices. The effect is both eerie and pathetic. The musi-

cal theme which is used throughout the action for Gypo is excellent.

It is perhaps too much to expect the legitimate stage, which is struggling to keep alive by curtailing expenses and which distrusts new ideas anyway, to do much experimenting with musical accompaniment. With the movies the situation is different. Not only are new ideas welcomed, but the producers of Hollywood can afford the best talent to develop them. It would be a great feather in the cap of the young art of the motion picture if it could realize the musical possibilities which the theatre has so largely ignored.

Making Better Movies

By Arthur L. Gale and Russell C. Holslag

THIS is primarily, and preeminently, a book to be used. It is written for the amateur movie maker, the person who wants to make movies to please himself. Such a person, if he is just about to start, should skim through the book to find out what he needs to start with, get his apparatus, and then read the book again, thoroughly and carefully, and always keep it where it can easily be consulted.

This is a new edition, with such additions as the experience of its authors have suggested for its improvement. It tells, as well as a mere book can, how a novice can plan and make movies. If he learns all this book teaches, he may still retain his amateur standing, but he will have a knowledge of movie making that could readily be put to professional uses.

Published by the Amateur Cinema League, 105 W. 40th Street, New York City. Price, \$1.00

Pictures for Peace

ANOTHER recognition of the motion picture is noted in the formation of a Moving Picture Department in the National Council for Prevention of War. The Council seeing the importance of the motion picture in aiding the cause of world peace has created this new Department with Albert Benham as its director. Mr. Benham has been associated with United Artists, RKO Radio, and Paramount and brings an under-

(Continued on page 14)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Maria Chapdelaine

From the novel by Louis Hémon; directed by Julien Duvivier; music by Jean Weiner; produced by France Films; distributed by Franco-American Film Corporation.

THE CAST

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Maria Chapdelaine..... | Madeleine Renaud |
| François Paradis..... | Jean Gabin |
| Mother Chapdelaine..... | Suzanne Despres |
| Alma—Rose Chapdelaine..... | Gaby Triquet |
| Azelma Chapdelaine..... | Maximihenne Max |
| Lorenzo Surprenant..... | Jean-Pierre Aumont |
| Samuel Chapdelaine..... | André Bacque |
| Eutrope Gagnon..... | Alexandre Rignault |
| Esdra Chapdelaine..... | Thomy Bourdelle |
| The Priest..... | Daniël Mendaille |

OUT of the same life from which Louis Hémon fashioned his novel, following the novel with sufficient faithfulness in his choice of incidents, Duvivier has created a motion picture that is rare among book adaptations. Its distinction and success come from the director's love and respect for his material, which he has been wise enough to leave unimproved, as so many movie directors understand improvement, content merely to present it in terms of his own art. "Merely" is a mild word: to change literature into motion picture is an achievement not too often accomplished.



A bit of the Canadian country life in "Maria Chapdelaine"

The film happens to be one which the reviewer need not describe lengthily: he can say "Read the novel" to those who want to know what it is when it is told in words, with complete confidence that the reader of the novel will not be disappointed when he sees the picture. It is a simple presentation of French Canadian life in those country districts where that life is still hard, demanding something of the pioneer spirit of the first settlers. Its plot, if it can be said to have one, concerns a girl and three men who loved her, and her choice to remain among her own people instead of going to the easier life of a big town. Interwoven with this simple strand of romance—simple but strong with life and death emotions—is the richly detailed life of the countryside, the songs and sorrows of the homes, the passing seasons, the work and play, all the warm sense of lovable people being human and natural and courageous in the undeterminable business of living.

It is a lovely film, not merely in its outer dress but in its spirit. Beneath the simple beauty of its scenes, the countryside and its habitants (so sympathetically acted by an excellent cast of players) is a moral beauty, unobtrusive but all pervading and deeply moving. The film won a prize in France—it will be loved in this country by everyone who responds to the noblest things in the French character.—J. S. H.

Peasants

Written by M. Bolshintsov, V. Portnov, and F. Ermler; directed by F. Ermler; photographed by A. Gintsburg; music by V. Pushkov; produced by Lenfilm; distributed by Amkino.

THE CAST

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| <i>Varvara Nechayeva</i> | <i>E. Younger</i> |
| <i>Egor Nechayev, her brother</i> | <i>B. Poslavsky</i> |
| <i>Gerasim Platonovich, her husband</i> | <i>A. Petrov</i> |
| <i>Gerasim's mother. E. Korchagina-Alexandrovskaya</i> | |
| <i>Head of the District Political Bureau</i> | <i>Nikolai Bogolyubov</i> |
| <i>Anisim, the Village Elder</i> | <i>Vladimir Gardin</i> |

HERE is a Russian film that goes another step away from obvious propaganda, though implicit in it are of course all the Soviet social standards and ideology that prevail in the Soviet Union to-

day. The strength of the film is in its humanity and sympathy, and its great difference from the earlier Soviet pictures is in presenting as people compounded of the ordinary nobilities and frailties of mankind characters who used to appear as unqualified villains. The result goes far deeper as a representation of Russian life, and as a comment on it.

The story is the tragedy of a man whose character and traditions made him impossible to assimilate into the new social order, the son of a rich farmer in whom the ideas and feelings of his family and class persisted so strongly that he could not fit into the co-operative scheme of things. His deep trouble was not merely social but domestic, for his wife, whom he loved and who loved him, was heart and soul with the new movement. The fatal difference flared into tragedy over their unborn child—it was like the unbridgeable chasm between two parents of different religions, to each of whom religion is a passion, and the salvation of the child dependent on it.

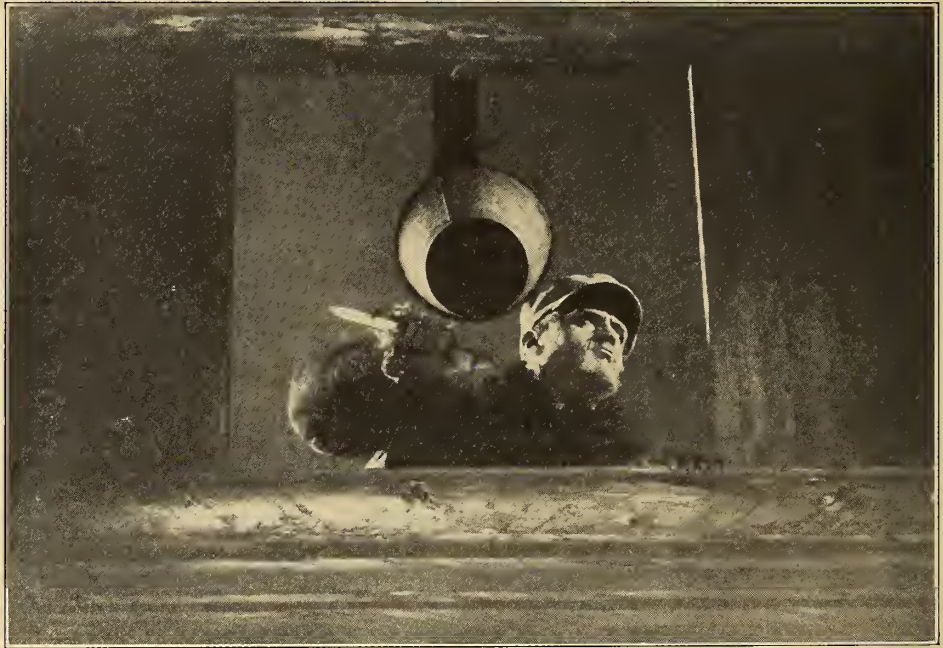
In the background of this domestic struggle is a village community of peasants, adjusting themselves with varying degrees of comfort and understanding to the collective system of hog-raising. It is a rich, earthy background, peopled with rather bewildered children of the soil, and pictured with warm humor and understanding. Among these peasants is the plotter, the man whose father has been sent to Siberia, his mother into hiding, his brother killed, embittered by all his family disasters. More intelligent than most of the villagers he is able to lead them into trouble, just as he is able to lead his brother-in-law into crime. The most lacerating part of his situation is that his schemes to ruin the collective must be kept secret from the wife he loves so deeply. When that secret inevitably becomes known to her the struggle is so fierce and sudden that uncontrollable passions leap into action. He kills her, not deliberately but in a kind of terror, and then tries to cover his crime by making her appear to have hanged herself.

The tremendous episode of the killing is followed by the slow, tense uncovering of the crime. It has the fascination of the solving of a mystery, intensified by a sense

of watching actual life and real people whose souls you are able to observe, observe with a sort of detached compassion.

All of this is a triumph of dramatic narration and rare cinematic direction. The

ultimate achievement is a sympathetic, not too biased picture of Russian life, given universality by profound human qualities that extend beyond the bounds of race and nationality.—J. S. H.



B. Poslavsky, the tragic Kulak in "Peasants"

Shakespeare a la Cinema

AFTER a lifetime of campaigning against the more formidable bogey-men of the screen, a career which included the first talking picture, the first gangster pictures and the first attempt (in *I Am a Fugitive*) to bring sociological elements to the screen, the organization headed by the brothers Warner was obviously the one to take Shakespeare in hand. Nowhere but in this fascinating picture business, probably, could one find that the event of the year, heralded variously as an epic of courage and a triumph of ideals over commercialism, consisted of producing on the screen a well-known work of a playwright whose dramas have had universal recognition and almost continuous world-wide production for over three hundred years now.

The current introduction of Shakespeare to the screen, if one overlooks the Mary

Pickford presentation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which isn't a bad idea, finds the Bard of Avon being approached with a reverence unmatched since the time when Samuel Goldwyn produced a play by Elmer Rice with all the photographic fidelity that such an occasion required. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* runs two and a quarter hours, includes all the Shakespearean imagery and most of the Shakespearean words, and, all in all, provides more subjects for argument than any production of the year.

To begin with the obvious question, How does Shakespeare "go" in the movies, the answer is, as in so many of these cases, Yes and No. The main effect of this particular translation of Shakespeare into cinema has been to enlarge immeasurably the physical scope of his imagery, lending substance and form to what were merely airy concepts, while throwing into clear relief the utter unsuitability of much of the play to the demands of the screen.

As long as the picture confines itself to that deep and marvellous "wood outside Athens," the screen is in its element, bringing an Oberon whose cloak flows out behind him like the night itself, picturing elves and fairies and similar folk with prodigal largesse, and scattering fogs and mists and Roxy-like stairways into the air. Even then there is testimony to the truth of a philosophy older than Shakespeare's, to the effect that one man's meat is another man's poison. What are elves and fairies from Row J, may very well, from Row E, be nothing but twitching ballerinas, galloping waggishly up a swirling cloud of plaster-of-Paris. Oberon may remind you of Dr. Caligari's Cesare, and the riotous mumming of Bottom, the weaver, and Flute, the bellows-mender, may be nothing more to you than the routine funning of a typical Warner stock company.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, far from being a thing of unity, divides easily enough into sections of Fantasy, Romance and Comedy, tied together by the sort of loose, running bowline of plot which the movies have been striving to outgrow in their production of musical comedy. If, in 1929, the Shuberts had produced a musical under the direction of Max Reinhardt, the result would have been something roughly comparable to this. The difference lies partly in the beauty of Shakespeare's lines, in the lightness of his fantasy, and in the fine shading he lends to thoughts that are often, in the hands of these humans, remarkably prosaic thoughts.

Of the three divisions it is the romantic which fails most noticeably, partly because of the basic silliness of the plot, and partly because of a generation which is accustomed to seeing the same thing done much more amusingly in a Noel Coward play. Not even a prophetic bard could have foreseen anything like the performance of one Dick Powell. Such romance as there is rests prettily, daintily and with tender loveliness on the shoulders of the ladies, for both Jean Muir and Olivia de Havilland are the stuff that such dreams are made on. The romance fails both in its situations and in its people, in asking you to believe in the unbelievable and to be interested in the uninteresting.

The fantasy, as might be expected, comes off somewhat better, unless you are one of those who are unduly sensitive about woodland elves scampering about by means of concealed wires. An impish Puck, blowing fog from his mouth to wrap the woods in folds of damp concealment, so that lovers might become separated; an Oberon, attended by myriads of sombre, sable henchmen; a Titania, of gossamer loveliness, surrounded by dancing fairies and played to by a woodland orchestra of gnome-like creatures; such scenes, if you take them casually, as simply as you accept many another of the conventions of the screen, can transport you as effectively into another world as ever did any stage production, more effectively, indeed, than anything but the imagination of a reader. But there again, if you are prone to fidget, the imagery will be nothing but Reinhardt ballet-mongering and the gnomes will probably do nothing so much as remind you of another fantastic film, *Freaks*.

It is in the comedy scenes that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* comes closest to the lives of all of us, and because of this the matter of casting becomes one of much greater prominence than elsewhere in the play. Imagine the activity of the people who regularly turn Shakespeare over in his grave when they read of James Cagney, Joe E. Brown, Hugh Herbert and Frank McHugh being scheduled for this! It is only fair to add that, now they have seen the film, a good many of them feel the same way. It will be the contention of this review, however, that in the casting of these Athenian townspeople, the moviemakers did some of their most astute work.

There may be some difference of opinion about the merits of James Cagney's performance—handicapped both by lines and by an ass's head, Mr. Cagney's lot is not a happy one—but nobody should deny the sheer genius which injected Joe E. Brown into the role of Flute, the bellows-mender, who plays the role of Thisbe in the masque. Certainly, when *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first produced, it must have been cast with people who were the Cagneys and Browns and McHughs of their day, the East Side boys of old London. Although the

comedy is grievously shackled by the necessity for close-ups and line-spouting, rather than action, the main difficulty for us today is in accomplishing a sufficient transfer of thought when confronted by actors one knows so familiarly, through other films, as gangsters, drunkards or knockabout comedians.

Perhaps in that suggestion of mental attitude is the solution to some of the perplexing questions brought up by the film version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play itself is not representative enough of Shakespeare to settle any questions about his adaptability to the cinema; certainly this, though a valiant endeavor, should not lead anyone to believe that adaptation even of masterpieces is superior to original composition for the medium.

As Shakespeare, the production is almost photographically accurate; as cinema, it is mediocre; but as an exhibit, it is fascinating and well worth anybody's time, filled with an unusual beauty of word and scene, rich in visions of another time, with something remote and so completely of the essence of escape from the present, that to see it is to step again into that other world which only the library and the motion picture can provide.—J. A. T.

Modern Juveniles

THE Henty books were once the most dependable means by which youthful interest in the more romantic aspects of history could be satisfied. Long and rather pedestrian, they came along each year with a new offering of adventure laid in some carefully detailed historical setting. It took an industrious reader at least several days to read one of them.

Today that youthful interest is catered to, in swifter fashion and much more thrillingly, by an occasional historical movie. Historical in the sense that they go back into the past and re-create old times and sometimes people who once actually lived. They usually find it expedient, for the sake of a better plot, to re-shuffle events into a new romantic pattern. The result, perhaps, is that many people get a rather odd idea of important happenings in other days, but some few may

be lured into further investigation privately, and thus into some acquaintance with things as they really were.

This season has brought two handsome examples of movie historicals, *The Crusades* and *The Last Days of Pompeii*. Both of them are spectacular and thrilling, and both of them indulge in the habit of telescoping historical events for the sake of what is probably considered more effective drama. *The Crusades*, for example, is only the crusade in which Richard the Lion-Hearted took part, and it compresses several years into what appears to be a pretty brief though highly eventful expedition. A fairly unimportant queen, in the person of Loretta Young, is also made more important in the struggle between Christian and Saracen than less glamorous historians appear to have been aware of. But out of a rich welter of improved romance emerge some stirring battle scenes, done in DeMille's best style, and the figure of Saladin, more noble and civilized than all the Christian kings who went to wrest the Holy Sepulcher from him.

The Last Days of Pompeii (frankly bearing no relation to the old Bulwer-Lytton novel except in its title) also takes some liberties with chronology, narrowing the time between the Crucifixion and the most famous of Vesuvius' many eruptions by at least a score of years. Not a very violent distortion, and undoubtedly justified by the chance to let the volcano take a decisive hand in a fine melodramatic struggle between ancient paganism and early Christianity. The film does, at moments, re-create scenes of Roman splendor, with its architecture and gladiatorial fights, and bring vivid, if fleeting, glimpses of what the empire of the Caesars was, with its far-flung provinces. It has, too, a human interest that DeMille's more skillful pageantry always lacks, besides an impressive impersonation of Pontius Pilate and a moving sense of the Christian spirit beginning to make itself felt in the world.—J.S.H.

(Continued from page 9)

standing of the medium to this new activity with the motion picture.

The Council it is announced, does not plan to make films but rather to consider in its

specialized interest the various values of the present feature and short films.

Publications are available telling of the program and plans and those interested may write to Mr. Benham at 532 Seventeenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Young Reviewers Visit Little America

THE grown-ups who think they have a problem in the motion picture as it affects the child have one less phase of it to worry about—the truthfulness and the “studio hokum” involved in a documentary film. The Young Reviewers, the group of boys and girls from 6 to 16 years of age sponsored by the National Board of Review for the purpose of viewing and discussing motion pictures, recently “went with Admiral Byrd to Little America” and the trip was a most enjoyable one. But their perception as to the “real life” and the “studio shots” and the lack of explanation regarding several facts left nothing to be desired.

To get a clear conception of these remarks of the boys and girls it must be reiterated that they are not a selected group but everyday children and that they are not stimulated by any adult supervision. The regular routine was slightly broken at the Byrd film showing and instead of a discussion a questionnaire was filled out, which was as follows:

A definition of a documentary film. What other documentary films have you seen? Which one did you like best? What parts of *Little America* seemed to have been taken at the South Pole? What parts in a studio? Is the purpose of the Byrd expedition clear to you from the film? What was the purpose? Are the results clear? Does the expedition seem successful? Is the reason for the Admiral's seven months alone clear? Did he accomplish what he was after? What do you think of the penguin comedy? What was the most interesting part of the picture to you? Who was the most interesting person? Did you learn much from the film? Please name some facts that you learned from it. How valuable do you think the pic-

ture is as a historical picture? Is the entertainment good? Do you like pictures of this type to be wholly educational or do you like them to be entertaining also? Did you see the previous film, *With Byrd at the South Pole*? If so which of the two did you like best? Why? Did you listen to the Little America radio broadcasts? Did you read much about the expedition? If so, did this picture add anything to your knowledge or were you disappointed?

Of the 47 members present most of them preferred *Little America* to other documentary films they had seen although *Man of Aran*, *With Williamson Beneath the Sea*, *Pinchot's Monsters of the Deep*, and Frank Buck's animal pictures received several votes. And a fifteen year-old girl's summation of the question as to what seemed real and what staged, answers that question for the majority: “All scenes in which the background played an integral part such as the unloading of the Jacob Ruppert, the digging out of Little America, the expeditions, aerial flights, seemed real, but all the interiors seemed ‘studio’.” As to their opinion on the question of how the so-called studio scenes affected them when put in a purported first-hand record, a 14 year-old girl answered, “I think it was necessary to make it well rounded but it does spoil the sense of it being first-hand.” Others were of the opinion that it was “all right, because it would have been impossible to film all the scenes down there, any way.” A boy of 15 said, “It's the wrong thing to do because it adds a question to the other scenes as to them being genuine.”

As to the purpose of the expedition—39 thought it was clear, 1 did not, 3 did not answer one way or the other and 4 modified their answer with: partly, should have been clearer, etc. A boy of 12 thought the purpose was “to explore some land that was never before seen and to make intensive scientific study of the land.” Five boys were convinced it was to claim the land for the United States and most of the girls under 12 thought it was to find out what the coldest temperature was at the Pole, while the older boys and girls were of the opinion it was all for scientific research, many indicating the meteoric survey as the most important.

As to the results of the expedition being clear—34 thought they were; 4 were of the opinion they were not and 9 were doubtful. As to the expedition being successful—41 thought it was, 2 said it was not and some elucidated with: Boy (12)—“I don’t know”; Boy (16)—“I thought it was scientifically successful but the picture doesn’t clear this up”; Girl (15)—“It wasn’t brought out so well but I am inclined to say yes.” As to the reason for the Admiral’s sojourn alone—26 thought it was clear; 9 did not think it was and 12 were doubtful.

The penguin comedy was both approved and disapproved, one little lady of 10 saying, “The baby sounded a little bit like Betty Boop, but I think it was swell.” A girl of 15 said, “The penguin comedy was extraneous but on the other hand not irritating because there wasn’t enough of it,” while a boy of 15 said, “It did not add or subtract.” A boy of 14 did not like the idea at all because it was a historical picture and there was no place for “fantasy.” In the general summing up—the opinion was about 50-50—some thinking it “cute”, “put a little humor in the picture”, against “kinda silly”, “out of place” and “superfluous”.

The scene receiving the votes for the most interesting was the Admiral’s sojourn and rescue although many of the voters added that in their opinion the great lack in the picture was not showing any scenes of the actual rescue of the Admiral—they wanted to see the interior of his hut after all those months, as well as the Admiral himself. The next most popular scene was the unloading, digging out and rebuilding of Little America. Naturally the most popular person was the Admiral with 33 votes, although a girl of 14 qualified her vote with “we really didn’t get acquainted with anyone else.” The cook and Murphy each received 4 and the other 9 votes were “no one”, “I couldn’t say” and so on.

Forty-one acquired new knowledge, 5 did not learn anything new (one young boy of 12 saying that he had read an article in the *National Geographic* that was practically the same thing as the picture, even using some of the same pictures for illustration) and 1 could not answer at all. Among some of the facts that the 41 learned were: the way

people have to live there; fact that airplanes could be preserved in that intense cold; that there was land in Antarctica and any place could be 80 degrees below; that the expedition went to study meteorology and claim land; that it really was a hard job; I didn’t know a thing about Little America and now I have a good idea; about Antarctica in the throes of the ice age and pressure ice; the studying of cosmic rays. The preservation of the ‘planes was a great source of interest to most of the young boys and the intense cold to the girls.

The historical value of the picture, in the opinion of the majority, will grow with years if the picture is kept available although some of the boys were of the opinion that it could have been made more scientifically valuable than historically. A boy of 16 felt that “the picture itself wasn’t very valuable but the facts and data that Byrd brought back will be very valuable.” Three of the older boys and girls thought *With Byrd at the South Pole* was more valuable because it was the first and this second one did not have much to add.

All but one sceptic of 16 thought the entertainment was good—he was of the idea that it “was silly.” As to a picture being wholly educational or both educational and entertaining the majority thought the mixture was the best with a girl of 16 adding “a picture should be entertaining to be educational” and a boy of 16, “I like them to be wholly educational because when I go to see pictures of this type, I expect them to be so.” The consensus of opinion was expressed in “it is best to learn while enjoying also.” For the wholly educational picture 3 votes were cast.

Of the 12 who had seen both Byrd pictures all but 3 preferred *Little America*—these three being of the opinion that the first Byrd picture was new and novel at the time and this one lost through that fact. The other 9 thought the last picture gained much through sound, that it was more educational, entertaining and clever.

Of the 47 members present, 24 had listened to the broadcasts, and 27 had read something about the expedition. As to their new knowledge or disappointment—25 felt they had learned more about Little America

and the expedition and only 1 was disappointed. The other 21 were neither disappointed nor more learned.

A few had additional remarks to make which might prove interesting—one girl of 14 thought the maps at the beginning of the picture should be left on longer so people could get their bearings. A boy of 15 had read quite a good deal of the danger of the breaking ice when the ships were unloaded and he didn't think this danger was stressed enough. A boy of 12 didn't think the narration was clear enough—it was "too muddled." A girl of 14 was so impressed that she thought all school children should have a chance to see *Little America*.

If any of our readers desire to use this questionnaire in their local motion picture activity with young people we will be glad to send them a copy upon request.

4-Star Clubs

THE National Board of Review in an endeavor to extend the opportunity for free discussion of motion pictures among boys and girls, has formed the National Association of 4-Star Clubs. This Association may be considered the junior member body of the National Board. It has a sixteen year-old president, three vice-presidents and an Executive Board of fourteen members, all between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Throughout the past summer this Executive Board of the 4-Star Clubs has met once a week drawing up a constitution and by-laws of the national organization and formulating outlines and plans for the various standing committees, of which there are now twelve.

The association is non-commercial and any group of boys and girls may join. A new club may be formed or a club which has already been formed, for instance, an English club, reporting club, literary society, in fact any kind of a group which is interested in the study of the motion picture, may affiliate with the National Association.

The following report is one made by David Iscovitz, the fifteen year-old chairman of the Publicity Committee, on the October meeting of the New York City Council of the National Association:

"The First Annual Housewarming of the New York City Council of the 4-Star Clubs was held at the American Museum of Natural History on October 5th. Because of the numerous followers of the organization the meeting was held in two sessions. The junior group, consisting of boys and girls attending grammar school, occupied the hall in the morning and the high school group took it over for the afternoon.

"The occasion was chosen to fire the opening gun in our important campaign to establish a 4-Star Club in every school, church and community group. Our national president, Robert Adams, Jr., conducted this very important meeting on which so much of the future success of the 4-Star Clubs depends. Explanatory literature on every phase, purpose and reason of the 4-Star Clubs was distributed to all present. This was done in the hope that each present would carry the knowledge and desire to establish a 4-Star Club in his or her own church, school or community.

"The Tournament and Contest Committee announced their essay competition to many interested members present, and offered two tickets to Frankie Thomas' current Broadway play as the prize. The subject was 'Why I Want to Form a 4-Star Club.' Master Thomas paid us a visit at a preview of his picture, *Dog of Flanders*, last spring and we have been anxiously looking forward to seeing him again in action.

"The Museum officials kindly showed us a pictorial account of an Alaskan expedition made by Captain Jack Robinson, under the interesting title of *Trail Mates*. The picture was very instructive and we found ourselves indebted to the Museum for an hour's excellent entertainment.

"Glenn Fowler, age 12, spoke on the points to be considered in 'Choosing Good and Bad Pictures,' in the course of which he spoke very highly of the deer story, *Sequoia*. Another member, Edward Brazill, age 16 of St. John's, Brooklyn, spoke on the subject of 'How to be Sure that the Younger Generation is Seeing the Better Type of Films.' He strongly stressed the necessity of having the boys and girls choose their own films, for they have minds of their own and resent the 'prescribed list' and 'pictures to see and

not to see." Instead of telling the children what to see, we intend to educate them in "such a way as to enable them to do their own prescribing and to do it beneficially at that." And incidentally, that is the main function of the 4-Star Clubs.

"But we are not content to specialize solely in New York City, and our efforts to interest the young people in the idea of forming 4-Star Clubs will soon cover the nation. Any faculty adviser or person desiring information about the 4-Star Clubs can obtain it free of charge by dropping a line to the National Association of 4-Star Clubs, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City."

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

GRAND EXIT—Edmund Lowe, Ann Sathern. Screen story by Gene Tazue and Graham Baker. Directed by Erle C. Kentan. Columbia, 7 reels. Mystery story, well sprinkled with comedy, about the search for a determined pyromaniac. Family.

HANDS ACROSS THE TABLE—Carole Lombard, Fred McMurray. Screen story by Vina Delmar. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. Paramount, 8 reels. Lightness in direction and acting make an entertaining comedy of this story about a manicurist obsessed with the desire to marry a rich husband. Mature.

***HERE'S TO ROMANCE**—Nina Martini, Mme. Schumann-Heinck, Anita Louise. Screen story by Ernest Pascal and Sonya Levien. Directed by Alfred E. Green. Twentieth Century-Fox, 8 reels. A young tenor and a young dancer and their troubles with their rich backers till they win success and happiness. The specialties are the high spots, Martini's splendid singing, the ballet dancing, Escudero's dancing. Schumann-Heinck makes a promising screen debut. Family.

HIS NIGHT OUT—Edward Everett Hartan, Irene Hervey. Screen story by Charles Christensen. Directed by William Nigh. Universal, 8 reels. Very funny comedy about a hypochondriac whom love drives into the midst of a big robbery. Family.

I LIVE FOR LOVE—Everett Marshall, Dalores Del Rio. Screen story by Jerry Walk and Julian Epstein. Warner, 6 reels. A radio singer and an actress begin as rivals and end in love. Like an elongated Vitaphone short in substance, with old standbys like Allen Jenkins, Hobart Cavanagh and Burton Churchill providing the chief entertainment. Family.

***I LIVE MY LIFE**—Jaan Crawford, Brian Aherne, Frank Morgan. Screen story by Gottfried Reinhardt and Ethel Borden. Directed by W. C. Van Dyke. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer,

10 reels. The taming of a spoiled rich girl by an Irish archaeologist. The man is the most interesting character, full of dash and charm and common sense, and the film abounds in the Van Dyke humor that enlivened *The Thin Man*. The cast is full of likeable players. Family.

LADY IN SCARLET—Reginald Denny, Patricia Farr. Screen story by Arthur Haerl. Directed by Charles Lamont. Chesterfield, 7 reels. Smoothly and entertainingly told story about a baffling murder solved by a nonchalant detective. Family.

***LAST DAYS OF POMPEII, THE**—Preston Foster, Basil Rathbone, Darathy Wilson. Screen story by J. A. Creelman and Melville Baker. Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack. RKO-Radia, 10 reels. A brand new story with an old title—the conflict between world and spirit under the Roman Empire. Unusually human for so spectacular a production. Magnificent pictures of ancient Pompeii and Jerusalem culminating excitingly in the famous eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Suggested for church use. Family.

LAST OUTPOST, THE—Cary Grant, Claude Rains. Story by F. Britten Austin. Directed by Louis Gasnier and Charles Barton. Paramount, 8 reels. A beautifully photographed and interesting story of the English struggle in northern Africa during the World War. Family.

***LITTLE AMERICA**—Photographed by Jahn L. Herrmann and Carl O. Petersen. Narrated by Gayne Whitman. Paramount, 6 reels. A pictorial record of Admiral Byrd's second expedition to Little America. Both entertaining and instructional. Suggested for schools and libraries. Recommended for list of films worth being kept permanently available. Family. Junior matinee.

***METROPOLITAN**—Lawrence Tibbett, Virginia Bruce, Alice Brady. From story by Bess Meredith. Directed by Richard Baleslawski. Twentieth Century-Fox, 8 reels. Superb rendition by Mr. Tibbett of several favorite semi-classical and operatic selections woven into a light and amusing story of an aspiring opera singer's troubles with the temperamental and amorous prima donna. Thoroughly satisfactory entertainment of the highest order. Family.

***MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, A**—James Cagney, Jae E. Brown, Mickey Rooney. Play by William Shakespeare. Directed by Max Reinhardt and William Dieterle. Warner, 12 reels. See Exceptional Photoplay Department. Page 12. Suggested for schools and libraries. Family.

MIMI—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Gertrude Lawrence. Murger's "La Vie de Bohème." Directed by Paul Stein. First Division, 8 reels. Murger's wistful romance of young Bohemians in the Latin Quarter given a handsome English production. Some of Puccini's music is used, though the story is not so much that of the opera as that from which the opera was adapted. Mature.

NEW FRONTIER, THE—John Wayne. Screen story by Robert Emmett. Directed by Carl L. Pierson. Republic, 5 reels. An interesting story of the opening up of homestead lands in the old Cherokee Strip. Family.

NO MAN'S RANGE—Bob Steele. Screen story by Forbes Parkill. Directed by Robert N. Bradbury. Supreme, 6 reels. Entertaining Western about a cowboy who walks into a lot of trouble when he visits his stepfather whom he has never seen before. Family. Junior matinee.

***O'SHAUGHNESSY'S BOY**—Wallace Beery, Jackie Cooper. Story by Harvey Gates and M. S. Boylan. Directed by Richard Boleslawski. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Story of an animal trainer and what happened when his wife took his little boy away from him. Sometimes rather heavy emotionally, with sequences of terrific excitement. Fine individual touches in the direction, excellent acting and glamorous glimpses of circus life. Family.

\$1,000 A MINUTE—Roger Pryor, Leila Hyams. From Saturday Evening Post story by Everett Freeman. Directed by Aubrey Scotto. Republic, 6 reels. Continuously hilarious comedy about a penniless newspaper reporter who finds that his agreement with two millionaires to spend a large amount of their money in twelve hours is more difficult than it sounds. Family.

PAYOFF, THE—James Dunn, Claire Dodd. Screen story by George Bricken. Directed by Robert Florey. First National, 6 reels. Good consistent characterization of a sportswriter whose blind love for his completely unscrupulous wife drives him to sacrifice his cherished reputation for honesty. Mature.

PERSONAL MAID'S SECRET—Margaret Lindsay. Screen story by Lillian Hayward and F. Hugh Herbert. Directed by Arthur G. Collins. Warner, 5 reels. Amusing human comedy about the influence of a maid on the fortunes of the people she has worked for—nice characters and altogether pleasant. Family.

RAINBOW'S END—Hoot Gibson. Screen story by Rollo Lloyd. Directed by Norman Spencer. First Division, 6 reels. Enjoyable Western with plenty of good comedy—a wealthy rancher's son and his pal take jobs on a rival ranch and find plenty of exciting things. Family. Junior matinee.

***RENDEZVOUS**—William Powell, Rosalind Russell. Novel by Herbert O. Yardley. Directed by William K. Howard. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. Highly entertaining comedy drama during World War era when a lovely German spy caused the head of the Code Department in Washington a lot of trouble. Brisk, amusing dialogue and the kind of role that suits William Powell so well. Family.

SHE COULDN'T TAKE IT—George Raft, Joan Bennett. Screen story by Gene Towne and Graham Baker. Directed by Tay Garnett. Columbia, 8 reels. Mixture of melodrama, farce, and nutty comedy, skillfully blended,

about an ex-racketeer left in charge of the irresponsible family of a millionaire. Many excellent bits of humorous characterizations. Family.

SHIPMATES FOREVER—Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler. Screen story by Delmer Daves. Directed by Frank Borzage. First National, 10 reels. Four years at Annapolis, a girl and innate heroism make a loyal navy man out of a cynical crooner. Splendidly photographed record of life at the Naval Academy, and many moving and amusing incidents. Family.

SPANISH CAPE MYSTERY, THE—Donald Cook, Helen Twelvetrees. Novel by Ellery Queen. Directed by Lewis D. Collins. Republic, 7 reels. One of the late Ellery Queen mysteries, in which he shows up the stupidity of the local investigators in the strange murders that were perpetrated. Family.

STORMY—Noah Beery, Jr., Rex, King of Wild Horses. Novel by Cherry Wilson. Directed by Louis Friedlander. Universal, 7 reels. Delightful and unusual picture, filmed in the beautiful Painted Desert, of a boy's devotion to the wild stallion he raised from a colt. Family. Junior matinee.

THREE KIDS AND A QUEEN—May Robson, Henry Armetta, Frankie Darro, Charlotte Henry. Screen story by Poppe, Beecroft and Marlind. Directed by Edward Ludwig. Universal, 10 reels. Miss Robson's familiar impersonation of a roaring, cynical old rich woman softened by the love of children, with the help of chance and kidnappers. Henry Armetta gives another of his delightful performances. Family.

***THREE MUSKETEERS**—Walter Abel, Paul Lukas, Margot Grahame. Novel by Alexander Dumas. Directed by Rowland V. Lee. RKO-Radio, 11 reels. A lively and exciting version of Dumas' romance of the young King's guard and his three friends who saved the Queen's honor. Suggested for schools and libraries. Family. Junior matinee.

TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL—Richard Dix, Leslie Banks, Madge Evans. Novel by B. Kellerman. Directed by Maurice Elvey. Gaumont-British, 9 reels. British production. Sincere but heavy story of an engineer's efforts to build a tunnel between England and America as a safeguard to world peace. An elaborate production, with George Arliss and Walter Huston playing minor parts. Suggested for church use. Family.

TRIGGER TOM—Tom Tyler. Screen story by George C. Franklin. Directed by Henri Semelle. Reliable, 6 reels. Western with a different plot, and superb photography. Family.

TWO FISTED—Lee Tracy, Roscoe Karns. Play "Is Zat So?" by James Gleason and Richard Tabor. Directed by James Cruze. Paramount, 6 reels. Amusing comedy of a lazy prize-fighter and his trainer and the part they took in helping a young mother keep her small boy. Family.

VIRGINIA JUDGE, THE—Walter C. Kelly. Screen story by Octavus Roy Cohen and Walter C. Kelly. Directed by Edward Sedgwick. Paramount, 7 reels. The kindly old judge has everything of life he wants except the love of his stepson and the story tells of his efforts to gain that. The picture has plenty of humor and many dramatic moments. The star makes the judge a very human person. *Family*.

WATER FRONT LADY—Frank Albertson, Ann Rutherford. Screen story by Wellyn Tottman. Directed by Joseph Santley. Mascot, 7 reels. Pleasant little romance in which a young gambler finds a new kind of life through meeting a girl on a barge. *Family*.

WAY DOWN EAST—Henry Fonda, Rochelle Hudson, Slim Summerville. Novel by Lottie Clair Parker. Directed by Henry King. Twentieth Century-Fox, 8 reels. The old melodrama of the wronged girl and the Puritanical squire, humanized and made remarkably appealing, with lovely New England scenery and unusually good period atmosphere. *Family*.

WESTERN FRONTIER—Ken Maynard. Screen story by Ken Maynard. Directed by Albert Herman. Columbia, 6 reels. Good Western with plenty of fighting, fine photography and the beautiful horse, Tarzan. *Family*.

WINGS OVER ETHIOPIA—Paramount, 6 reels. A timely feature showing the country where the present war is being fought, with an interesting record of native customs. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILMS

DJURGARDS PROMENAD (A Promenade in the Royal Swedish Djurgard Park)—Scandinavian Talking Pictures, 1 reel. Interesting scenic accompanied by music. *Family*.

LARSSON I ANDRA GIFTET (Larsson's Second Marriage)—Edward Person, Dagmar Ebbeson, Birgit Rosengren. Screen story by Edward Person and Gideon Wahlberg. Directed by S. Bauman. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, 8 reels. Highly amusing Swedish comedy, with some fine music and singing, excellently photographed. A jolly pastry cook's second wife almost upsets his plans for his daughter. No English titles. *Family*.

***MARIA CHAPDELAINE**—See Exceptional Photoplays, page 10. France-Film, 8 reels. Suggested for schools, libraries and church use, especially Catholic. *Family*.

STOCKHOLMS KURIOSA (Stockholm Curiosities)—Scandinavian Talking Pictures, 1 reel. Various well presented scenes accompanied by comments in Swedish. *Family*.

SVERIGE KRONIKA (Swedish Newspictures)—Scandinavian Talking Pictures, 1 reel. Several subjects of interest are shown. *Family*.

SHORT SUBJECTS

(1 reel each unless marked otherwise)

(For the family audience—junior and mature so marked)

INFORMATIONALS

BEAUTIFUL BANFF AND LAKE LOUISE (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

BUGLE OF THE BLUE GRASS ("Sports" with Bill Corum)—RKO-Radio. Famous training stables.

CAMERA HUNTING (Our Own U. S. Series)—Vitaphone. Wild animals and birds. *Junior*.

CAPITOL IDEA, A (Easy Aces Series)—RKO-Radio. Mr. and Mrs. Ace view an interesting scenic of Washington, D. C.

CLEVER CRITTERS—Educational. Animals. *Junior*.

FOOTBALL TEAMWORK—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Junior*.

***GYMNASTICS**—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Excellent shots of gymnastic feats showing the camera catches more than the eye can easily see. *Junior*.

ITALIAN RIVIERA (Along the Road to Romance Series)—Twentieth Century-Fox.

JUMP, HORSE, JUMP (World of Sports Series)—Columbia.

JUMPING CHAMPIONS (Sportlight Series)—Paramount. *Junior*.

LAND OF THE EAGLE, THE (World on Parade Series)—RKO-Radio. Excellently photographed scenes of Guatemala.

MARCH OF TIME NO. 7—RKO-Radio, 2 reels. Building in Palestine; New England's summer theatres; how the article "And Sudden Death" was written; sentiment in Japan and U. S. towards latest war.

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 4—Paramount. Jewelry making; Charleston, S. C.; Latin American music. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family*.

PATHE TOPICS NO. 7—RKO-Radio. Metropolitan Museum's Hall of Knights; Jones Beach; cane shop in English village. *Junior*.

PLAYGROUNDS (Our Own U. S. Series)—Vitaphone. Pinehurst, Lake Placid, Coney Island, etc. *Family*.

SPORT ON THE RANGE (Sportlight Series)—Paramount. Cowboys rounding up wild horses, elk, buffalo. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Junior*.

WATER SPORTS—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

CARTOONS

ADVENTURES OF POPEYE—Paramount. *Junior*.

FOILED AGAIN (Terrytoon)—Educational. Very funny burlesque of the old-fashioned melodrama about the villain carrying off the heroine with the noble hero in hot pursuit. *Junior*.

HENRY THE FUNNIEST LIVING AMERICAN (Betty Boop)—Paramount. Betty keeps a pet shop. *Junior*.

I WISHED ON THE MOON (Bouncing Ball)—Paramount.

KING OF THE MARDI GRAS (Popeye the Sailor)—Paramount. *Junior*.

MERRY OLD SOUL, THE (Merry Melody series)—Vitaphone. Amusing color cartoon of Old King Cole's troubles when he marries the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. *Junior*.

MOLLY MOO-COW AND THE INDIANS (Rainbow Parade)—RKO-Radio. *Junior*.

***MUSIC LAND** (Silly Symphony)—United Artists. For sheer cleverness and novelty one of the most remarkable of this series. *Junior*.

NEIGHBORS (Color Rhapsody)—Columbia. Ammunition salesman starts a war between two friendly roosters. *Junior*.

OLD PLANTATION (Happy Harmonies)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Nursery toys put on a horse race. *Junior*.

***ON ICE** (Mickey Mouse)—United Artists. Highly amusing skating adventures. *Junior*.

QUAIL HUNT, THE (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—Universal. *Junior*.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY, THE (Serial) NOS. 4-9—Rex, King of Wild Horses, Rin-Tin-Tin, Jr. Mascot, 2 reels each. Interest of this serial holds up well. *Junior*.

BROADWAY HIGHLIGHTS NO. 4—Paramount. Broadway and Harlem amusement centers.

BY REQUEST—Vitaphone. Claude Hopkins' orchestra.

CAVALCADE OF MUSIC, A—Paramount. Series of American songs—from Indian music to present day.

DESERT DEATH (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.

DOORMAN'S OPERA, THE—Vitaphone, 2 reels. Variety acts.

GREAT AIR MYSTERY, THE (Serial) NOS. 3-7—Universal, 2 reels each. The aviator and his cameraman continue to find adventure. *Junior*.

HOME WORK—Leon Errol. RKO-Radio, 2 reels. Amusing domestic comedy.

HONEYMOON BRIDGE—Leon Errol. Columbia, 2 reels. Happy marriage wrecked by bridge.

HOT MONEY—Thelma Todd, Patsy Kelly. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.

IN LOVE AT 40—Edgar Kennedy. RKO-Radio, 2 reels.

MAJOR BOWES' THEATRE OF THE AIR NOS. 3-4—RKO-Radio, 2 reels. Amateur hour.

MANHATTAN MONKEY BUSINESS—Charlie Chase. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.

ON YOUR RADIO DIAL—Universal, 2 reels. Entertainment by radio stars.

REG'LAR KIDS—Vitaphone, 2 reels. Young children put on an orphanage benefit—in color. *Junior*.

RODEO DAY—Educational. Good cowboy singing.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 1-2 (Series 15)—Columbia. Stars at work and play.

SPRING NIGHT (Paramount Varieties)—Paramount. Lovely and unusual film, beautifully photographed, of interpretative dancing.

STAR GAZING—The Radio Rogues. Columbia, 2 reels. Clever imitations.

STARLIT DAYS AT LIDO—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. Technicolor film of the screen stars watching an entertainment.

TICKETS, PLEASE—Georgie Price. Vitaphone, 2 reels. Amusing comedy about a search for football tickets to the big game.

TUNED OUT—Ruth Etting. RKO-Radio, 2 reels. Musical.

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE, THE, NO. 4—Columbia. The popular radio personality. *Mature*.

WEE MEN—Vitaphone. Singers' Midgets in an unusual and delightful short about the residents of a miniature kingdom. *Junior*.

Pamphlets on the Board's organization, program and personnel are gladly sent upon request.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. X, No. 9



December, 1935



Clark Gable and Charles Laughton on board the "Bounty" (see page 7)

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
 - m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
 - j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
 - *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.
-
- f *AH WILDERNESS—Eric Linden, Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Beery, Alice MacMahon. Play by Eugene O'Neill. Directed by Clarence Brown. An unusually sympathetic screening of O'Neill's play, done with humor and tenderness. A high school boy in a small town of 30 years ago, and his family's concern when he bumps into serious things of life for the first time. Both atmosphere and acting are excellent. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
 - fj *ANNIE OAKLEY—Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Melvyn Douglas. Story by Joseph A. Fields and Ewart Adamson. Directed by George Stevens. Colorful and highly entertaining is this picture about the girl wonder sharpshooter of a half century ago. The entire cast is excellent and the settings and historical characters authentic. The scenes of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show will bring nostalgic memories to those who remember his annual visits of the early 1900's. RKO-Radio.
 - m FRISCO KID—James Cagney, Margaret Lindsay. Screen story by Warren Duff and Seton I. Miller. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. Exciting and colorful story of the Barbary Coast and the man who became leader of that lawless region. Good authentic atmosphere gives a vivid picture of the ruthlessness and brutality of that time. Warner.
 - m GREAT IMPERSONATION, THE—Edmund Lowe. Novel by E. Phillips Oppenheim. Directed by Alan Crosland. An interesting though improbable story of a man who impersonates himself and thus saves his wife from madness and reveals a plot against England. The star does an excellent piece of acting in the dual role. Universal.
 - f *I DREAM TOO MUCH—Lily Pons, Henry Fonda. Screen story by Elsie Finn and David G. Wittels. Directed by John Cromwell. RKO's grand opera picture built around the professional rivalry of a couple who would otherwise have been perfectly happy. A lively and pleasant story with some of the best singing possible to hear on the screen. A couple of grand opera selections and new music by Jerome Kern. RKO-Radio.
 - m I FOUND STELLA PARISH—Kay Francis. Screen story by John Monk Saunders. Directed by Merwyn LeRoy. Dramatic story of an actress who sacrifices everything for her child. First National.
 - fj *IN OLD KENTUCKY—Will Rogers. Story by Charles T. Dazey. Directed by George Marshall. The lovable Will Rogers in a worthy successor to *Judge Priest*—the action takes place in the horse training Kentucky country where the star is an old-time trainer and the plot has to do with his efforts in behalf of peace between an old inhabitant and a wealthy new-comer. The whole cast is excellent with especial mention to Bill Robinson who teaches Mr. Rogers quite a few fancy steps. 20th Century-Fox.
 - f IN PERSON—Ginger Rogers, George Brent, Alan Mowbray. Story by Samuel Hopkins Adams. Directed by William A. Seiter. Entertaining story of a movie star recovering from a nervous breakdown. Bright and literate, with some incidental sly digs at movies, radio and human folly in general. RKO-Radio.
 - f MAN OF IRON—Barton MacLane. Screen story by Dawn Powell. Directed by William McGann. The rise of a steel worker from foreman to vice-president and what success did to his life. First National.
 - f MARY BURNS, FUGITIVE—Sylvia Sydney, Melvyn Douglas. Screen story by Gene Towne. Directed by William K. Howard. The story of a girl who is railroaded to prison, her escape and how she found happiness. Paramount.
 - m MELODY LINGERS ON, THE—Josephine Hutchinson, George Houston. Novel by Lowell Brentano. Directed by David Burton. A woman sacrifices everything for her son who was born during the World War and though separated from him, she lives for the day when he can have the chance in opera that his father had. United Artists.
 - f MISTER HOBO — George Arliss. Screen story by Paul Laffitte. Directed by Milton Rosmer. A cheery old tramp gets accidentally involved in a scheme of a French banker to defraud investors. In typical Arliss fashion he makes things come out all right. A British production. Gaumont-British.

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW

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Vol. X, Number 9

December, 1935

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The Board's New Treasurer

THE National Board of Review announces to the readers of its magazine the election to its office of Treasurer, left vacant by the sudden death of Dr. William B. Tower, of Mr. George J. Zehrung.

Mr. Zehrung has been Director of the Motion Picture Bureau of the National Council of Y.M.C.A.'s since 1918. Before that he was connected with the New York City schools as instructor in Fine and Manual Arts, bringing to that position and to his present one an interest and training from years of study at Columbus (Ohio) Arts School, Pratt Institute, Columbia and New York Universities, followed by three years in Europe, two at the Karl Kappes Studio in Munich, Germany, and one at the Karl Von Rydingsvard Studio.



George J. Zehrung

Mr. Zehrung's connection with the National Board of Review has extended over many years. He became a member of the Review Committee in 1920. He was elected to the General Committee in 1922, to the

Executive Committee in 1923. He served at different intervals as Chairman of the Membership Committee and as a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photographs. He has addressed audiences over a wide territory both as a representative of the National Board, and as an authority on different aspects of the motion picture.

And now Mr. Zehrung has assumed, in spite of his heavy duties which are not confined alone to the Y. M. C. A. but cover other fields of non-theatrical motion picture activity, this Treasurership to which he will give, as is his wont, unstintedly of his time and interest.

Because of his practical experience, his long and unselfish interest in the National Board, his complete knowledge of its work and its problems, his personal acquaintance down through the ranks of

its membership, his tried loyalty to, and belief in its institution—all throughout his own busy days—the organization feels itself fortunate in being assured that its Treasurership is again in thoroughly competent hands.

The March of Time -- Why, How, Where?

*The following story of the beginning and the development of that unique news release of the screen, *The March of Time*, is based on a recent talk given by its managing editor, John S. Mortin, at the general course on motion pictures presented under the auspices of the School of Education of New York University and the National Board of Review.*

SINCE its first public appearance in February of this year, *The March of Time* has caused more controversy and discussion than any other recent development in the cinema world. Today most movie audiences know what *The March of Time* is but many are still wondering whence it came, how it is done, and where it is going. Briefly, I shall try to answer all three questions in the order of their appearance.

First, whence came the screen version of *The March of Time*? Directly it came from the radio broadcast of that name, now in its sixth year. The radio broadcast of course, came from the news magazine "Time." When the news re-enactments known today by some 30 million radio listeners were first invented by "Time's" editors, it was intended that they should advertise and stimulate interest in the magazine. Gradually as the weekly broadcasts became one of the most popular programs on the air, it occurred to the editors and others that a similar technique might do a job on the screen that needed doing. So for some time before the feature was actually released, a technique and working plan for the *March of Time* on the screen was being contemplated.

However, there were problems attached to producing a screen *March of Time* which had not faced the radio program. First, the screen product could not be used as an advertising medium for "Time" but would have to sell itself to individual exhibitors as an entertainment feature. Second, although experienced journalists, the editors of the magazine knew absolutely nothing of motion picture technique.

This problem solved itself when Louis de Rochemont, former producer of the *Magic Carpet Series*, editor of *Fox Movie-*

tone News, and one-time Navy photographer, appeared on the scene and announced that he had a plan for adapting the air program to the screen. From "Time" to work with him went Roy Larsen as President, and myself. With the three of us as a nucleus, a working staff was set up and there began a year of experimentation in which we learned something about movies and something about what was to be our screen technique. Gradually a production routine evolved.

The purpose of the new feature was to be twofold: to present a news story—beginning, middle, and end, and to make it good motion picture entertainment.

Now always to be on the spot ready to snap an action picture when news breaks is too much to hope of any man and it is for this reason that most newsreels confine themselves to baby parades, football games, naval reviews, and the dedication of monuments. These things are news, indeed, but they are also staged so that the cameraman may know in advance and be on the spot when the news is made. Such is not the case with the majority of news events of national or international importance. There is no way of knowing when a dictator or king will be assassinated, when an international incident will precipitate a war, when a prominent political figure will resign from office or expose a racket, when an industrial dispute will burst into flame or a new party attempt a coup d'etat. These things happen suddenly and with no immediate warning. It is the business of the news editor to anticipate these events when possible and to be able to dig up background information about them, and to interpret them.

In this news gathering field, "Time's" editors have had long experience. Consequently, the first problem is to decide what is important news today and what will still be news a month or two months from today, as it takes four weeks to make one *March of Time* and each issue is shown for several consecutive months after release date. The next job is to write a script based on one of the most likely subjects. "Time"

has news agents all over the world and an elaborate clipping file and research library on which the script writers can depend for facts. The third step is to go out with carefully prepared script in hand and find the necessary pictures.

There are a number of sources of available film. First come the libraries of regular newsreel companies. Much old film which may be used to build up the background and explanation of a news story can be found in such libraries. Then there are the participants in the news itself. We have been very successful in securing persons whose activities have just made or are about to make news to act before the cameras. Contrary to general newsreel practice, a prominent personage is not requested to stand before a camera and smile while a news commentator speaks for him. Instead he is persuaded to act out the part he plays in real life. One of our greatest difficulties has been to get men to be themselves when confronted by a camera. Cabinet members and factory hands alike read script and rehearse until they can re-enact or pre-enact their natural roles in a news event without self-consciousness. Then *March of Time* sets up its cameras and shoots the scene. Sometimes not individuals but whole organizations are asked to participate in the making of an episode. Instances of this kind are illustrated in the Army and Navy, Pan-American Airways, and CCC episodes in past releases and the Coast Guard episode now in preparation. At times the script calls for pictures of a personage of news importance who is camera-shy—in fact so shy that he has himself protected by bodyguards to ward off cameramen. Such subjects present a special problem.

To secure pictures of the aging and secretive Sir Basil Zaharoff, famous munitions salesman, our Paris cameraman had to masquerade first as a cab driver and later as a pushcart peddler. He concealed his camera in the meter and under a pile of oranges before he could get anywhere near the suspicious old man.

When actual scenes cannot be found or taken of the persons or events that have made or are making news, *March of Time*

re-enacts from documented news reports scenes necessary to the continuity of the story.

After all the film has been collected for one script, it is roughly spliced together and run off. Then begins a long siege of cutting, re-allocating, retaking, and collecting more film. At last, the finished sequence, which runs from five to eight minutes, is ready. Then follows the sound synchronization and the addition where necessary of *March of Time's* commentator's voice to clarify and explain certain pictures. Thus one of the three or four episodes which make up a monthly release is constructed.

When finished, the subject must be dramatic and entertaining, as well as news.

Several different types of episodes have proven to be especially well adapted to *The March of Time's* type of treatment. One is a modified and coordinated type of travelog, a travelog that takes you behind current headlines instead of into a picturesque backwater of the world. This type is illustrated by the Russian episode of release No. 4. Here *The March of Time* had many fine new pictures of remote and interesting places and people in the Soviet Union all of which were tied together by the newsworthy fact that the great Soviet Army had just been pledged, paradoxically, to maintain the peace of the world. More recently, the splendid Palestine pictures, taken by *March of Time's* own cameraman, Charles W. Herbert, for a feature film soon to be released entitled *The Land of Promise*, provided excellent material for a brief description of the country where so many Jews, driven by Hitler out of Germany, are going, and of what they are doing there.

A second type of episode *March of Time* has found useful is a "quickie," a little story in itself of small significance but which, with a brief comment, may serve to illustrate a whole diplomatic or political problem. Such a "quickie" was the story of the American motor speedster in France who, when arrested, would pay his fine only if the judge would agree to apply it on France's war debt to the United States. Another "quickie" was the instance of the manufacturer, James B. Harris, in Janes-

ville, Wisconsin, who refused to sell barbed wire to Italy or Ethiopia for a new "No-Man's-Land."

A third typical treatment is the pictorial biography of men prominent on the political or economic scene, whose doings make and effect much news. In this way *March of Time* treated Father Coughlin, Huey Long, Strikebreaker Bergoff, Munitions Salesman Zaharoff, and others.

The origins and activities of organizations important in national or international politics may also be described, such as the CCC, the Croix de Feu, the G.O.P. Bootleg Coal was an economic study. The sequence on Wild Fowl in the November release touched on a newsworthy phase of Conservation. The two subjects are typical of what might be called the Narrative Essay.

When *March of Time* first appeared in commercial theatres last February, there were loud huzzahs for the greatest innovation in motion pictures since Mickey Mouse. Its creators were not so sure and released a quantity of publicity pointing out that the film was new, experimental, and uncertain, that later issues would be better, and not to expect too much. They were really afraid that the public had been oversold. However, in the course of a few months *The March of Time* became known in fact as well as in name. Today, distributed through RKO, it is showing in over 4,000 theatres throughout the country.

But discussion about *March of Time* has not subsided. Today talk is not of what *March of Time* is but of where it is going. It is accused of all manner of isms—Catholicism, anti-Catholicism; Semitism and anti-Semitism, Communism and Fascism. After the new release just opened describing the G.O.P., it will probably be accused of Republicanism. The fact is that a picture of the news such as *March of Time* tries to give cannot possibly please all of the people all of the time. In six minutes it is physically impossible to discuss all sides of a political situation in any country. Consequently, it is necessary to choose that party or topic of interest which is at the forefront of the news at the moment. Disapproval of such parties and their policies in no way alters the fact that they are news.

Two releases dealing with the U. S. Army and Navy were promptly labeled by pacifists as rank militarism. The same groups have been as enthusiastic in their praise of two more recent issues containing sequences on U. S. Neutrality and the Italo-Ethiopian war.

The Russian episode was condemned by some as "pro-Soviet" because of its intimate picture of the efforts of Soviet leaders to unify the country. In the very next issue, Fascism reared its ugly head simply because Col. de la Rocque of the Croix de Feu was the central character studied.

To these varied accusations we know no better answer than that given in the "Motion Picture Herald" of November 2nd. An editorial entitled "Smacking Strongly" says: "'Time's' screen efforts are colored and controlled by exactly the same tastes and motivations as the printed pages of 'Time' and its gaudy vanity-book-of-business supplement, 'Fortune'. Smacking strong, or at least smacking as strongly as they can, is the dominant characteristic of their output. They are just natural-born strong smackers, exponents of teleological development of the wise-crack. *The March of Time* smacks much more strongly of an effort to sell some film than it does of an effort to sell Fascism or any other ism. It has been inevitable that the impact of the 'Time' idea on the screen would be accompanied by some degree of disturbance. If it had not achieved disturbance, it would have been automatic failure and several smart young fellows would have been chagrined extremely."

PEOPLE who allow their curiosity concerning the secrets of motion picture making to spoil their enjoyment of a film are like the man who never hears the music from a phonograph because he is listening to the scratch of the needle, according to Ernst Lubitsch, Managing Director of Paramount Studios. He says: "The business of a motion picture is to entertain. The really intelligent portion of an audience does not concern itself with questions as to how an effect is obtained. They are interested only in being held spellbound. What does it matter? The effect is real.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Mutiny on the Bounty

Adapted by Talbot Jennings, Jules Furthman and Carey Wilson from "Mutiny on the Bounty," "Men Against the Sea" and "Pitcairn's Island," by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall; directed by Frank Lloyd; photographed by Arthur Edeson; musical score by Herbert Stothart. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Bligh | Charles Laughton |
| Christian | Clark Gable |
| Byam | Franchot Tone |
| Smith | Herbert Mundin |
| Ellison | Eddie Quillan |
| Bacchus | Dudley Digges |
| Burkitt | Donald Crisp |
| Sir Joseph Banks | Henry Stephenson |
| Captain Nelson | Francis Lister |
| Mrs. Byam | Spring Byington |
| Tehani | Movita |
| Malmiti | Mamo |
| Maggs | Ian Wolfe |
| Morgan | Ivan Simpson |
| Fryer | DeWitt Jennings |
| Muspratt | Stanley Fields |
| Morrison | Wallis Clark |
| Hayward | Vernon Downing |
| Tinkler | Dick Winslow |

MUTINY on the Bounty proposes certain questions concerning cinema that ask for some answers, in order to evaluate the film at its level of achievement or non-achievement. For instance: (1) Does it demonstrate the power of cinematic invention over mere photographic representation?

(2) Does it suggest that cinematic interpretation is more important than the story it seeks to narrate and dramatize? Or, put another way, does it illustrate what is dramatic within, and because of, the frame, or fabric, of the visual moving image apart from what is dramatic only because the camera is telling a story made moving and

exciting by another medium—the printed word?

(3) Does it do with the saga of the Bounty something that the Hall and Nordhoff account (the printed word) did not, and could not, do? If so, what?

These questions, while not framed as above, have all, if you try to disentangle them, been more or less involved in the various critical discussions of *Mutiny on the Bounty*. They are large and vital ones—if one is not content merely to say, with some embroidery, it is an important, or very beautiful, or a thrilling and adventurous film. Because trying to let the film, through some channel of analysis, answer these questions, is to throw some light on why it is thrilling and adventurous, or beautiful, or important, or either of two, or all three, if it is.

The ground, or better, seabottom of the film as a film is the voyage, life and death of the British armed sailing ship *Bounty*, commanded by one Captain Bligh; and the trials, fortitude, and madness of those people of the ship so ill-fated as to sail on her in the year 1787 from London dock to the farthest seas under that same mad, fortitudinous and most capable sailor of His Majesty's Royal Navy, all for the purpose of bringing back young breadfruit trees for transplantation in Merry England—poor shoots of trees plucked and shipped, but doomed never to reach that tight, celestial soil. There was a mutiny; Bligh and certain of the ship's company loyal to him were cast adrift in an open boat. With them he reached a Dutch settlement in Java, after a prodigious voyage, and navigational feat, of some three thousand miles. The muti-

neers with their native wives set sail from Tahiti and found permanent refuge in an island, far in a shrouded, only rumored, recess of that great sea. There, to avoid detection, they burned the *Bounty*, plank, frame and spar, red and crackling, to her trucks. Lost to, and out of, the world, there they settled to raise their children and live their lives out under the leadership of Fletcher Christian, the chief mutineer, Bligh's second in command.

To sort, fuse and fashion the essentials of this half-hidden, half-revealed chain of events—to bring alive the human beings they involved—to re-create the sea and its people, the hope of raising land after long, agonizing, brutal and, in the literal sense, murderous passage—to make burn again upon the film the salt and the lash, the sleet of storm, the simmer of calm, the pain, hunger, thirst, despair, the pressing iron of injustice, the anger and madness mounting to the red explosive moment when Bligh, the monster, was stripped of his power to prod, condemn and punish—not of his incomparable and essential courage—these were the problems in making *Mutiny on the Bounty* either just another thrill-raddled movie or a motion picture, cinematically conceived and humanly believable, vibrant, true.

What, or so it appears to many, occurred, in the process of meeting such demands, to a decidedly measurable cinematic degree and extent? Perhaps those queries already proposed may provide an answer that will bring some illumination both to the sins of commission and non-commission committed by this film as well as to the general question of what makes a good or bad—or, better, genuine or spurious—film. Let us to them!

First: Does *Mutiny on the Bounty* demonstrate the power of cinematic invention over mere photographic representation?

Surely. Take the sequences that deal with the sea, with the ship and her working, the setting and shortening of her sail, the handling of her gear; with the ship's visual, sensory aspect in relation to her elements, her sails hanging limp, gradually filling to the coming wind, standing full and asleep with the wind pressed in them, the lift of her bow under the driving spear of her bow-

sprit, the foam at her cut-water, the leaning convexed sheer of her hull and her canvas-engined spars. And that justly celebrated trail of shots where the *Bounty* waits to lift anchor for her arrogant and arduous voyage, the ship, all ready, the canvas lying ready in the buntlines on her spare, tall, alert masts, and about the harbor the spars of the other ships so quietly standing, and the spars of still other ships farther off with their hooks dropped in the roads (sensation of waiting and of the small, tight *Bounty* about to bid farewell to her greater sisters of the fleet, venturing forth through their serene ranks); then back to the motley, raucous last-minute visitors over-running her deck, being hustled overside into the shore boats, the harbor wall lined with its crowds, a thin moving human glue which one knows will hold the *Bounty* only a moment longer to the shore, the last drunken sailors of that desperate hodge-podge of a crew tumbling over the bulwarks, the Captain coming aboard, clearing away the last of the rabble. And—almost inspired interjection, forewarning of what is to be the experience and end of this flag-fluttering setting-forth—the scarred and dripping body of the seaman, already flogged to ghastly death, brought alongside and his triced corpse striped again with the flogger's whip at the orders of this Bligh to whom orders are orders—a stroke of cold and darkness striking across the gay, bright harbor scene where the very picture makes you feel the fair breeze calling the *Bounty* to weigh. Then her passing out between the lines of ships to their and the shoreward cheers (farewell *Bounty*! God speed!), to meet the stronger wind outside the river-mouth. Take, too, that vivid, too-compressed sequence in which Bligh and his exhausted men fight in their sea-filled open boat, the shots aboard the boat and those others of her scudding, low, logged, in the water, along and over the parallel running crest of gray sea, and the making of their land-fall—all too-compressed, for “Men Against the Sea” might well have been a whole film in itself—but all vivid, full of a bitter taste, felt in tumultuous motion—where the film does this, one can say it invents cinematically and in result is overpoweringly the finest realiza-

tion of a ship with sail ever shot upon a motion picture screen. But when the film reaches the island of the blest, something is missed. Something one does not see or smell or feel, as one felt, smelt or saw the sea, the ship and her people. Here the camera photographs trees, natives, a feast, a dance. And Mr. Gable among the ferns advances toward a charming native girl who advances supinely toward him. This the camera only succeeds in representing and not *creating*; from the open waters the film comes abruptly back to the studio and a pleasant picture of a good time had by all in far Tahiti—in spite of the splendid, joyous opening shots of this episode of the Islanders driving their canoes out through the curling, feathery surf to meet the tired and thankful *Bounty*. And so of such sequences as those of Byam leaving home, Byam and his fellow midshipmen on the voyage, the Naval Court where he is tried—these fall to the level of competent film-making in the representational sense. Where they occur the film is ordinary, although the extending chain of events lends them superficial interest. Compare these parts of the film with the other parts here set forth, and it is possible that one may say with certainty it is the power of cinematic invention (meaning imagination exercised first through the camera and then composed in the assemblage of shots in moving visual pattern to give the film a life of its own upon the screen) that makes *Mutiny on the Bounty*, like any other film worth the name, moving, beautiful and important as a work of art.

Second: Does *Mutiny on the Bounty* suggest that cinematic interpretation is more important to a film than the story it seeks to narrate and dramatize?

One answer might be, How important is the story the film would narrate or dramatize? And the answer to that might very well be: Is a great story taken from a novel or a great plot taken from a play the same great story or plot when its translation to the screen is consummated without imagination and without cinematic interpretation? It would seem that if the dramatic form of a film in terms of its importance, in relation to the importance of its source ma-

terial, is to be discussed, then it goes without saying that no matter how important its source material may be, the value of the film as a film must approximate it, equal it, or supercede it in terms of cinematic equivalent. A test for any film made from play, novel, biography, or history!—and a fair one.

Applying this test to *Mutiny on the Bounty*, one may safely submit that the three volumes of Hall and Nordhoff are of considerable importance in themselves, both as literature and as a thrilling reconstructed human document. Even had this material been formed and set before the camera, and even had the camera photographed it representationally, quite literally that is, it is conceivable that its ingredients of adventure, romance, brutality and blood, the hot passions of men in "the great open spaces" of the South Seas, would have given when baked in the standard oven, a fat cake with plenty of icing for a not too-aesthetically discriminating mass audience to munch down. That audience will munch this one down too; but mixed with the chocolate icing there happens to be good salt and in the belly of the cake a coin or two worth the finding—for the very good reason that imagination has had her day with this *Mutiny on the Bounty*, expressed in terms of living motion pictures; and that is a good thing for the masses, and a better thing for that still persistently hopeful—and therefore somehow gallant!—minority, the perceptive audience of the screen, which is the only audience that in the long run can do anything about it, and an altogether valuable thing for both the integrity and muscularity of the American motion picture—made in Hollywood. This not very usual occurrence happened because the treatment of the film in the target aimed at, and the consequent effort rises, for a great extent of its footage (and that is long), to conquer the routine drudgery of spinning a yarn in celluloid, no matter how good a yarn. It happened because the camera was given an eye that could see what much of it was about, that could see it was not altogether Bligh, or Christian, or anyone else that essentially mattered if the camera was going to tell this story in terms of the

screen itself; that beyond any one character or combination of characters, beyond any one event or series of events, in order to make a film of this fine story (half record, half legend) the camera had to see what composed the environment in which the characters lived and amid which the events occurred, it had to *feel* that atmosphere, that manner of life, that rigor, and those human responses—it had to perceive, catch, assimilate and free the colors of the sea and sky, the ship aloft and aloft, the noises and the variable breath and need of wind of a sailing ship in lonely places and through the never-ending grind of a long and fateful voyage. The cinematic treatment, not so much the story, gives *Mutiny on the Bounty* the moving virtues, pictorial, dramatic, and documentary, that for long stretches it displays. And doesn't the foregoing apply, as a favorable test of the virtues of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, to the same question put another way: Does the film illustrate what is dramatic within, and because of, the frame, or fabric, of the visual moving image, apart from what is dramatic only because the camera is telling a story made moving and exciting by another medium? Isn't it because this film does just this, that a large share of its real virtue is revealed (and to that extent, the character and nature of the film, as a distinct instrument of artistic expression, made indubitably manifest)?

The last of our three questions—and the most important—can be briefest, most explicitly, and most certainly answered.

Does this film do for the story of the *Bounty* something that the written chronicle (the printed word) did not and could not do?

Yes. In its best and predominate sequences it fills the screen with cinematically visualized imagination. It opens up the sea, and the sea moves or lies placid. It brings the wind and it lets it go. It brings the ship, her sweat, blood, and vigor, her sadness and the sorrow of her people, in a word, her spirit, her adventure, and her end—it brings these succinctly, visually, movingly, as only the motion picture can, and must do. Here the motion picture tells her tale—here it is to be seen, not to be read. Bligh

stands before you in his menace, his will, his brutality and stubborn courage; Christian more shadowy. They may not be Hall and Nordhoff's Bligh and Christian; it may not be Hall and Nordhoff's ship: All is something more—a projection of this life, this ship, this effort, this conflict of sea and men, and between men, through a meaningful flow of images, brought by a camera that photographs and yet does more than photograph. The film is on top of Hall and Nordhoff's show. It is a show on its own. It is the kind of show that only the motion picture, as a medium, can give. When it may be said that a motion picture gives it, the essential distinction between it and other forms of expression is named.

W. A. B.

Crime et Chatiment

(Crime and Punishment)

Adapted by Pierre Chenal, Christian Stengel and Vladimir Strichevsky from the novel by Feodor Michailovitch Dostoyevski, with dialogue by Marcel Aymé, directed by Pierre Chenal, photographed by Mundviller and Colas, music by Arthur Honegger. A "General Production," distributed in America by Lenauer International Films, Inc.

The cast

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Raskolnikov | Pierre Blanchard |
| Porphyre | Harry Baur |
| Sonia | Madeleine Ozeray |
| Downia | Lucienne LeMarchand |
| Madame Raskolnikov | Marcelle Geniat |
| Katerina Ovanovna | Sylvie Razoumikhine |
| Alexandre Rignault | Alexandre Rignault |
| Luchine | Aime Clariond |
| Alyona | Magdelaine Berubet |
| Lisaveta | Catherine Hessling |
| Nicolas | Douking |
| Marmeladov | Marcel Delaire |
| Polia | Paulette Elambert |
| Lieut. Poudre | Paul Asselin |

DOSTOYEVSKI'S novel, with all its wide and deep ramblings into the souls of many people, so pitifully entangled with poverty and misery and human error, has a definite and clear-cut dramatic basis, a double conflict between man and his conscience, between criminal and law, that needed only the right touch of craftsmanship to emerge as a powerful movie scenario.

Just enough concentration and simplification has been achieved in the film that Pierre Chenal has made, with a sketched-in



Harry Baur and Pierre Blanchar in the French "Crime and Punishment"

background sufficiently solid but not too obtrusive, to bring the dramatic heart of the novel effectively to the screen. It remains Russian, it remains Dostoyevski, but by a process of transformation rarely accomplished successfully with novels, it has become a motion picture in something more than name.

The film devotes itself entirely to the student Raskolnikov and his crime, to the shrewd police official Porphyre, and to the strangely pure prostitute, Sonia. Other characters appear only when they touch the train of consequences that flowed from the deliberate murder of the old hag Alyona and the almost accidental killing of her sister. Always the central thread is Raskolnikov's battle to prove himself an "extraordinary" man, one of the Napoleons who can commit crime without penalty—a battle of soul with Sonia and her spiritual horror of killing, a battle of brains with a Porphyre and his detective skill and psychological understanding of criminals.

Raskolnikov's crime was an intellectual experiment, a crime of idea. Terribly poor, to help himself and his mother and sister, he carefully planned to rid the world of a horrible old woman who had accumulated

a lot of money through cruel usury. He would have her money, and the human race would be better for the loss of one of its lice. He was sure it was all justified, and that he was a man who could get away with it.

He wasn't. When he killed the old woman he did something to himself, and the secret of it was something he couldn't live with. In the end it was not the law but his own suffering that drove him to confession, though the law was perpetually, with diabolical cleverness, at his heels.

Partly through an excellent scenario, partly through remarkable actors under sincere and understanding direction, this psychological drama comes to life in motion picture form with immense power. All the players do what they need to do extraordinarily well, and to say that of Pierre Blanchar as Raskolnikov, Harry Baur as Porphyre and Madeleine Ozeray as Sonia is superlative praise, for the depths and subtleties of the characters they play make tremendous demands upon the actors' art.

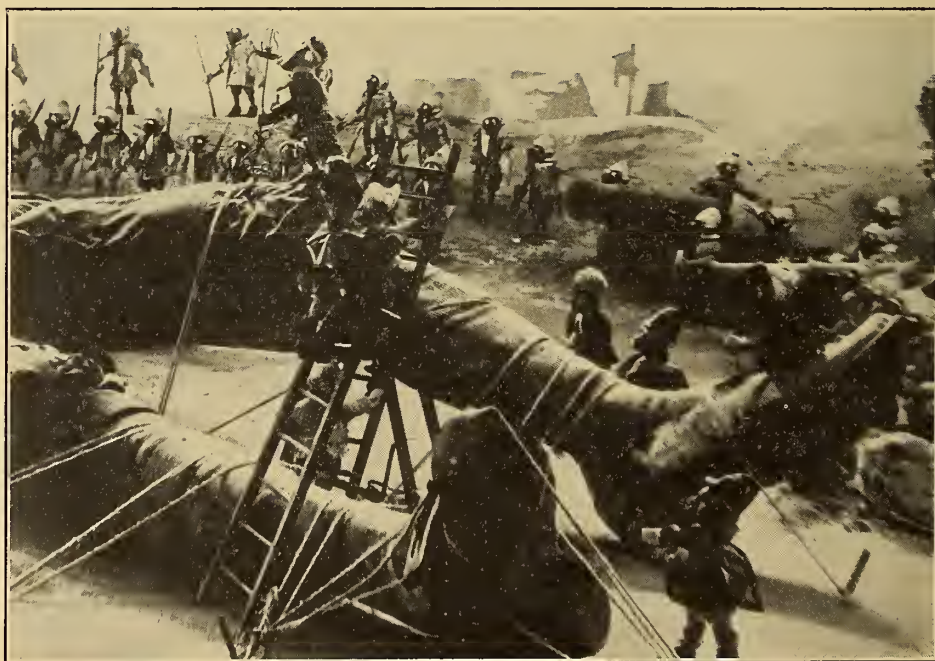
Few great novels have been so successfully translated into motion pictures.

By comparison the American *Crime and Punishment*, from which so much was ex-

pected, is a disappointment. Von Sternberg's film is a fumbling, immature piece of work, uncertain in the motivation and revelation of its characters and halting in its dramatic stride. There seems no intelligent sincerity behind it, no real understanding of the forces at work in the story, but rather a condescending attempt to make

what was probably considered a long and heavy novel more palatable for American audiences. The result seems longer and heavier than all of Dostoyevski's hundreds of pages, with an incongruous cast struggling with parts so ineptly written that even genius could not breathe life into them.

J. S. H.



Gulliver a Prisoner among the Lilliputians

The New Gulliver

Directed by A. Ptushko; screen story by G. Roshal and A. Ptushko, based upon Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels"; puppets designed by Sarra Mokil, puppeteer, F. Krasny, sculptor O. Tayezhnaya; music by Lev Schwartz; photographed by N. Renkov; Gulliver played by V. Konstantinov; voices by artists of the Moscow Kamerny Theatre; produced by Mosfilms; distributed by Oscar Serlin and Joseph Burstyn.

THE astonishing novelty about this film is that it uses puppets in a way one would hardly have imagined possible. It is a clever film, in idea and execution alike. It is little likely to have much influence on movie making because the special fitness displayed here, of telling a story with puppets, is so peculiar that it is almost unique.

It opens with some Soviet youngsters enjoying a celebration, in which a copy of "Gulliver's Travels" is given to one of them as a prize. The prize winner falls asleep and dreams that he is Gulliver, making a voyage to Lilliput. The main part of the film shows the adventures among the Lilliputians, who are the puppets, so tiny that the boy who is Gulliver is a giant by comparison.

The world in which young Petya Goolivare wakes up after his shipwreck is a caricatured microcosm of capitalistic society. The ruling classes—the king and his ministers and his court—are idiotic automatons, leading silly, empty, automatic lives. The workers who supply the means of living are enslaved, underground creatures. Young

Petya helps them in a revolt before he wakes up and finds himself back in his own happy Russia again.

The prelude of Soviet youth having a good time is excessively long, and in human interest far from what one now looks for in a Russian film. The exuberance and joyousness of the boys and girls hasn't much spontaneity about it: their smiling liveliness has something artificial in it, like that of a musical comedy chorus. Young Petya is a pleasant girl-boy, rather coy, with a mature mezzo-soprano voice when he sings. Perhaps this androgynous effect is intentional, with a definite significance. But altogether Ptushko is less impressive in directing his human actors than with his puppets.

The puppets are a different matter. They are amazingly expressive, with a plasticity that is a marvel. Their elastic faces and agile limbs are as far as possible from the jiggety jumpings of marionettes, with appearance and movement that visualize the

satiric idea behind them astoundingly. Only when their movements progress into action do they get jerky: then they are very like the trick films of Georges Méliès, who made a "Gulliver" back in the earliest days of the movies.

As satire *The New Gulliver* is pretty obvious, with the added disadvantage of making its workers (who should, for its purposes, have been of nobler stuff than the moronic capitalists) no less automatic and unhuman than their oppressors. Those who are sensitive to propaganda when it comes from Soviet Russia will squeal with anguish over the bald frankness with which the film's principles are stated. Those who can take their propaganda or leave it will find it entertainment of a most unusual kind. Like Swift's "Gulliver" its story and incidents have a strong juvenile appeal, and those who can be as little children, without thought of its social meanings, will enjoy it most.—J. S. H.

Le Dernier Milliardaire

(The Last Multi-Millionaire)

Written and directed by René Clair, photographed by Rudy Maté and Louis Née. Music by Maurice Jaubert. Produced by Pathé-Natan, distributed by Franco American Films, Inc.

The cast

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>The Queen</i> | <i>Marthe Mellot</i> |
| <i>The Crown Prince</i> | <i>Charles Redgie</i> |
| <i>The Princess</i> | <i>Renée St. Cyr</i> |
| <i>The Chamberlain</i> | <i>Paul Olivier</i> |
| <i>The Prime Minister</i> | <i>Sincol</i> |
| <i>The Footman</i> | <i>Raymond Cordy</i> |
| <i>The Band Leader</i> | <i>Jose Noguero</i> |
| <i>The Detective</i> | <i>Marcel Carpentier</i> |
| <i>Monsieur Banco</i> | <i>Max Dearly</i> |

IT is the habit of reviewers, with every new René Clair film, to say that it's not so good as the one before, or the one before that. Comedies seem to grow funnier in retrospect. But no one denies that René Clair is always René Clair, or that he does his own sort of thing better than anyone else can do it. The differences of opinion seem to arise from different conceptions of what satire ought to be.

Clair has somehow come to be looked on as a satirist, though he hasn't an atom of the passion and indignation that puts the force into all great satire. For the most

part he has found his fellow men, particularly his countrymen, odd and amusing creatures, whose petty ways he enjoys making an amiable show of on the screen. If the people are simple and not too malicious (like many of his Parisian underworld characters and his vagabonds) he is apt to be kindly and rather gentle with them, though completely frank. With middle-class pretentiousness and arrogance his portraiture moves definitely toward caricature, with a sharp, witty edge. Hitherto he has kept his locale in France, and his plots generally farcical.

In *Le Dernier Milliardaire* he has gone outside of France, into a mythical kingdom called Casinario, and he has picked the butts of his fun-making from all over the world. They range from bankrupt royalty and dictators and devices to invite the return of prosperity, to vigilantes, regimentation of workers, romantic love, orchestra conductors and cheer leaders. There is no one to feel tender about in this film—everyone is the comic victim of the love of money, from the queen who has to save her country by marrying the ruined millionaire who was intended for her grand-daughter to the foot-

man who had no cravat to wear with his uniform.

Casinario is perhaps a miniature of a topsy-turvy world, trying to maintain its place in the universe by desperate efforts to keep whirling faster. It is dizzying and hilarious, with several of René Clair's favorite actors in it to provide a lot of fun. The moral—if by chance the young lovers who run away supply a moral—seems to be that if you can escape to a desert island you can be happy though naked—if you have a radio.

Le Dernier Milliardaire comes nearest of all Clair's films to showing where he stands as a social commentator. Human stupidity and selfishness and folly, with their resulting woes to the race, do not stir him to reform or revolution or even bitterness—he remains amused and, though intensely interested, detached. Perhaps he is convinced that there must be a different kind of human being before there can be a different kind of world—J. S. H.

National Board of Review Annual Conference

THE Twelfth Annual Conference of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures will be held in New York City at the Hotel Pennsylvania, February 5th to 8th, 1936. A number of fine speakers will take part in the program and many interesting phases of the Board's work will be presented, demonstrating the review of unreleased films, the motion picture course at New York University, the junior club and review activity, visual education, and community organization programs. We hope to have a large delegation from our out-of-the-city membership and offer you this advance word in order that you can make your plans to attend. The Conference will come to a close with the Annual Luncheon which marks the twenty-first event of this kind to be given by the Board.

Better Films National Council Becomes National Motion Picture Council

THOSE who have worked for a number of years in the program of community motion picture activity and have noted the changes which have taken place during that time will, we believe, be interested in hearing of the recent decision of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review, in consultation with the advisory group of the Board's Council, to change the name of this Council from the Better Films National Council to the National Motion Picture Council.

The plan of organized community motion picture activities is an old one, having been first introduced by the National Board in 1916 as a Better Films program. At that time the designation Better Films was properly descriptive, but the intervening score of years has brought about a marked improvement in films and a resulting change in approach and attitude toward them. It is the belief of the Board that the present work of a community organization is to unite effectively in a constructive program for the support, study and use both recreationally and educationally of the finer motion pictures now available, and thus the change.

We invite your comments on this change and particularly in relation to your local motion picture activity.

Miss Overton Joins the Council

THE first person to become a member of the Council under its new name is Miss Florence Overton.

Miss Overton is associated with a field of cultural activity which has lately shown a decided interest in motion pictures—the library. She is Supervisor of Branches of the New York City Public Library, having been connected with library work in this city for a number of years. She is a member of the American Library Association and was elected to its Council in 1930. She has served on many committees of that As-

sociation, as well as on the New York State and City Library organizations. She does not believe in being an inactive but rather an active member of any organization with which she is affiliated and thus comes to the Council with the expressed idea of being of help in the work, which is what the Council needs and values.

Her especial outside interest is in the theatre and the motion picture but she does not leave this as only a personal interest but brings it into her professional life, for she feels that the library has a decided contribution to make along these lines and this feeling she imparts to the branch libraries under her supervision in their community wide activity.

A New Council Affiliation

THE South Buffalo (N. Y.) Better Films Council was organized in February 1934, and although less than two years old it has accomplished much and made itself an important factor in the community, under the able direction of Mrs. Hubbell J. Adams, its president and her active corps of officers. Represented in the Council are such organizations as mothers clubs, churches, schools, political clubs and Parent-Teacher Associations. The meetings are held twice monthly on the first and third Fridays. The officers are president, vice-president, secretary and recording secretary. The committees are membership, publicity, legislation, ways and means, and hospitality.

The Council made its first 15 minute broadcast on July 11th and has continued with one each week since. Mrs. Adams, the other officers and interested guest speakers give these broadcasts on affairs national and local in motion picture activity.

A guide to the current films is run in the newspapers. Family night and special children's programs are sponsored. Special observation days are noted and tie-ups planned. Everything is done to make the community constructively motion picture conscious. It is gratifying to welcome such a group into the National Council and therefore the announcement of this newest affiliation is made with pleasure.

School Motion Picture Committee described by Mrs. Madeleine S. Heyman

PARENTS and children make up a great per cent of the vast audience which goes to see the motion picture. To most people it is a recreation—an amusement—but to many it is an education, especially in the broader sense of the word, for whatever one sees and hears one surely retains and learns something from it. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that what one sees and hears be of value.

This brings up the point of what growing children should see and hear that would not only provide recreation and amusement but that would at the same time be of value to them. By children I mean through high school age. A great deal has been said of the invaluable work of teachers in preparing children to enjoy motion pictures which are especially recommended and in stimulating them to go to the better pictures. But the movies being an agent outside the school it is of more importance to consider what parents as citizens in a community are doing to see that their children go to the best, and further to see that the best is provided for them.

In New York City, as in every large metropolis, it is very difficult to make contacts between the theatres and the public due to such a variety of taste in one community. At many schools throughout the city there is a fine work going on to help the parents and children with their cultural problems. At Horace Mann School a Bulletin is published fortnightly, containing not only the best in motion pictures but also in art, theatre, music, books and lectures all over the city. Parents give their time and effort to work in committees for reviewing all these activities. The Parents League, composed of some 1600 parents, publishes monthly a bulletin reviewing everything in the theatre, art and motion pictures. "School Parent," the monthly magazine published by the United Parents Associations, contains a page on opportunities for boys and girls along these lines.

Last Spring a group of interested parents, believing that better motion picture

programs were needed, called a meeting at Friends Seminary of over 30 schools and organized a committee of parents in these schools to contact theatres and see what could be done. Up to date 5 theatres have offered to this group selected week-end programs, the publicity for which is being done in each school by a school contact person. In this way parents may be advised of what is being shown and be able to choose for themselves what to take their children to see. When the feature picture is acceptable to this committee the theatre will give a surrounding program of edited newsreel and recommended shorts. And the important thing is that these programs which are especially designed for Junior and Senior High School are enjoyed equally by adults.

We, as parents, need not necessarily feel that the cultural advantages which our children receive in a community should be left to the community or its agents. If we think there is a need of Better Cultural Opportunities—Better Motion Picture Programs, it is up to us as citizens and as parents to go out in the community and get them for our children.

Programs approved so far this season by the Schools Motion Picture Committee for the older school pupils have featured: *Curly Top*, *Bonnie Scotland*, *West of the Pecos*, *Here's to Romance*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Metropolitan*, *Wings Over Ethiopia*, *Broadway Melody of 1936* and *My Heart Is Calling*, with a special cartoon program for younger children.

COBLESKILL, N. Y., has become movie conscious in a constructive way and this is due to the active Motion Picture Committee of the New Century Club of which Mrs. Walter Gilbert is Chairman. She writes thus of the recognition: "Several letters from out of town people, as well as from residents, have been received saying they appreciated and used the published list of selected films. I think this listing is the most important and effective work done by the Committee. It has not only made it possible for the public to select picture entertainment but it has increased box-office receipts also, our manager admits this."

Young Reviewers Record

THE boys and girls of the Young Reviewers have had a busy and varied season and our readers, especially those interested in children and their opinions, may find value in their reactions to some of the outstanding pictures seen. It is very important to remember in connection with the work of the Young Reviewers, that their discussions are entirely free from adult supervision and promptings and that these are actual verbatim reportings.

The Crusades received the greatest accolade—there was not one dissenting vote and many of them thought it the best picture they had ever seen, although many questioned its historical accuracy as demonstrated by a boy of 13 who said, "While this picture was exciting and thrilling, I don't believe it was historically correct at all. According to Belloc's History of England the battle of Acre occurred during the Third Crusade and at Acre Richard was very sick—he was carried out on the battlefield on silken cushions. The picture didn't follow history at all but naturally they couldn't have a picture of the whole eight crusades so they took the third and kind of rolled it all into one." A boy of 15 thought "this was an excellent thing to do—if they had them all it would have been too boring for words while this picture was a masterpiece. Of course, it's much better to have a picture historically according to fact, but after all when you come to see a picture like this you come more for entertainment than knowledge." Several of the boys and girls believed that even if the story did not stick to facts there was a lot of instruction in it as regards architecture, medieval war machinery, arms, and so forth, and a boy of 13 thought there was "excellent moral instruction. It proved no matter what we do or give up there's nothing too great for the honor and glory of God." The majority of the group thought it excellent entertainment for the whole family though some made the proviso that children under 12 would not enjoy or understand it so some of the younger ones spoke up in their defense: girl of 12, "I think it was a wonderful picture—the battle scenes were so realistic and

I was so excited I nearly fell out of my seat. Someone said the battle scenes might make children sick—it's natural to see men die in battle, they expect it and you expect it." *The Crusades* discussion was one of the most interesting and lengthy ones ever held but we must go on to others if we are to cover a summary review of films.

China Seas was considered all right for grown-ups but for themselves they would just as soon "skip it." Clark Gable "did nothing but smile and show his dimple and I don't think that's acting" said a young miss of 12. A boy of 12 saw Jean Harlow for the first time and "I don't care if it's the last." Lewis Stone was excellent in his part but Wallace Beery, one of their favorites, let them down—"he didn't act the least natural" said a boy of 13. A girl of 13 was of the opinion that present-day ads ruin pictures for one, she had read the papers for the last week or so and "from the ads you knew all about the pirates and that Clark Gable would marry Jean Harlow in the end—it left no suspense at all."

The boys present at *Alice Adams* were unanimous in the opinion that it was a woman's picture, but even at that they were kinder to the character of Alice than the girls. They had great admiration for her because "she was poor and had ambition" and "wanted to do things right" but they believed Katharine Hepburn "overacted" was "too emotional" and "showed her teeth too much." The younger girls in the group (10 to 14) didn't want to believe a girl would "act that silly at a dance" but the older ones felt sympathy for her, although they didn't think they would ever go to a dance unless they had the right clothes. All who had read the book however, felt that Katharine Hepburn did justice, with honors, to Booth Tarkington's *Alice Adams*, "even to waving her hands around just like she did in the book."

They thought and said a lot about *Mad Love*, the horror picture starring Peter Lorre. A girl of 15: "I thought the acting was excellent, the plot very unusual and it interested me lots" but a boy of 12 said, "It's not fit to show to the public." A boy of 14 answered this young lad with "What one person thinks is not fit to see another person thinks opposite. I think

there are lots of people who like this type and just because there are others who don't is no reason why they shouldn't be made." It was practically agreed by all that the title was misleading, one would think it was "just another old love picture." A girl of 12 thought this kind of picture was "all right once in a while but not for a steady diet." And they all agreed that people should be warned ahead of time what kind of picture they were going to see—grown-ups as well as adolescents.

"Swell!" exclaimed a 10-year-old girl after the showing of *Broadway Gondolier* and that seemed to express the whole committee's reaction to this Dick Powell musical. A boy of 14 said, "I think this was far better than the usual musical picture. It was so much better without those elaborate, colossal, stupendous, stage productions which when you see them you know they couldn't possibly ever get them on a real stage. That's one reason why I think this picture is more believable than usual. Take the Venetian scene—that could really happen in every day life if people felt like singing—there was nothing extravagant about it." A boy of 11 liked "this picture and I don't usually like this kind. There was just enough of everything and usually when they put in some classical music they try to give you too big a dose."

She probably rated the lowest place on their summer program — it seems young people like things they believe could possibly happen and "this whole picture was too fantastic and unbelievable" according to a boy of 12. A girl of 13 felt "it very difficult to understand and too impossible to believe. I know it was meant to be fantastic but it went too far." A girl of 12 thought "children wouldn't understand it at all and grown people would be bored."

Joe E. Brown's *Bright Lights* was judged his best picture by the majority of the committee reviewing it—"it was good to see him in something except a baseball picture where he is a terrible swell head," according to a boy of 13. A boy of 15 didn't think there was much to the story but "people come to see Joe E. Brown not the story. The picture is built around the comedian not the comedian around the picture."

She Married Her Boss the Claudette

Colbert picture was "too talky" but the adults would probably like it, was the general opinion. This picture suffered too much from comparison with *It Happened One Night* though one lone boy of 15 kept insisting it was just as good if not better. A new child actress Edith Fellowes "did a lovely job." "She was really entirely different from any young person I ever saw. Shirley Temple is darling but the same in every picture. Edith Fellowes a brat in the beginning but sweet at the end and you loved her all the more for it" according to a young lady of 12. A girl of 15 thought this young actress was the outstanding part of the picture, "She was excellent—her sly looks and facial expressions were grand and she had so much character in her face. She was very natural and it's nice for a change to see a child really act like children you know."

The Irish in Us was well liked by all but considered "about average." A girl of 12 said, "It was different from any family picture I've ever seen. Usually they are not true to life. I come from an Irish family and I know these little incidents are true." The majority of the girls felt the prize-fight sequences in the picture were much better done than usual and the best picture with fights in it they had ever seen. Most of them didn't like to see "people get messed up."

Becky Sharp had both her followers and opponents—a boy of 12 felt that "the color was detrimental—it took away from the interest of the picture. You were thinking more about the color than you were about the story." A girl of 14, however, believed, "this color process has a great advantage in facial expressions. Of course in the others we have facial expression but in color you get so much more variation—the eyes seem to have so much more expression." A number thought that color would help all pictures and this brought up quite a lively discussion: a girl of 12, "I disagree—take *Private Worlds* for instance. That picture would have no interest in color. I think for old-fashioned pictures it's beautiful but it has no place in modern pictures. Modern pictures are what might be called business pictures—not for beauty but for

interest." A boy of 14 agreed with this young lady, "In modern times we don't have such loud color as they used to have in olden days so modern pictures wouldn't lend themselves to color so well." A boy of 12 thought "pictures like *G Men* certainly would look silly in color." Not many had read the book but no one seemed to have any sympathy for Becky at all and felt she got her just deserts—a boy of 12 summed it up with "I didn't hate her and I didn't sympathize with her a bit—she was just a modern gold-digger."

One can readily see from the boys and girls remarks that parents need have no fear about their children's movie selections—the pictures that were distinctly mature in content did not impress or entertain them in the least and they readily discerned what they thought adults would appreciate but what they themselves had "no use for." P.H.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

m—mature; f—family; j—juvenile

- f *MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY—See page 7.
- f NEVADA—Larry Crabbe, Kathleen Burke. Novel by Zane Grey. Directed by Charles Barton. The West of 40 years ago, and the opening up of a new cattle trail, with rustlers threatening it. Good scenery and minor characterizations, and generally true atmosphere. Paramount.
- fj NEW GULLIVER, THE—See page 12.
- f PERFECT GENTLEMAN, THE — Frank Morgan, Cecily Courtneidge. Play by Edward Childs Carpenter. Directed by Tim Whelan. A light and highly amusing story of a lovable liar and braggart who remains always the perfect gentleman. Clever dialogue and excellent acting on the part of Frank Morgan. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f PETER IBBETSON—Gary Cooper, Ann Harding. Novel by George du Maurier. Directed by Henry Hathaway. The story of a great love—two children parted, find each other years later but are separated again but they keep their love alive through the years in their dream meetings. Paramount.
- j SAGEBRUSH TROUBADOUR—Gene Autry, Barbara Pepper. Screen story by Oliver Drake. Directed by Joseph Kern. Western romance of a secret gold mine with the usual bad men, good riding and music. Republic.
- f SCROOGE—Donald Calthrop, Sir Seymour Hicks. From Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol." Directed by Henry Edwards.

A British production. A well produced and interesting picture for those who like Dickens. Primarily a picture for the Christmas holidays. Suggested for schools and libraries. Paramount.

- f SO RED THE ROSE—Margaret Sullavan, Walter Connolly. Novel by Starke Young. Directed by King Vidor. Romance of the South during the War between the States. The war scenes are well handled and the photography is very nice but the story becomes oversentimentalized in parts. Paramount.

- m SPLENDOR—Miriam Hopkins, Joel McCrea. Screen story by Rachel Crothers. Directed by Elliott Nugent. An inoffensive re-arrangement of the old plot about the young wife who helps her husband's career by letting his boss make love to her. More talk than action, but the dialogue is good. United Artists.

- f *STARS OVER BROADWAY—Pat O'Brien, Jean Muir, James Melton. Cosmopolitan story by Mildred Cram. Directed by William Keighley. Warner Brothers contribution to the cycle about singers who eventually arrive at the Metropolitan, with a singer of not quite grand opera calibre but with a plot, cast and background that make it the most entertaining of the series so far. Warner.

- f SWEET SURRENDER—Frank Parker, Tamara. Story by Herbert Fields. Directed by Monte Brice. Supposedly a musical show but with little music—Frank Parker is good when he sings and Tamara dances beautifully but not enough. Most of the action takes place aboard the Normandie. Universal.

- f THANKS A MILLION—Dick Powell, Fred Allen, Ann Dvorak, Patsy Kelly. Screen story by Nunnally Johnson. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. Amusing musical satire on politics, in which Dick Powell's charm gets him elected governor, proving that a crooner is more popular than a politician. Some excellent musical numbers contributed by Paul Whiteman's band and the Yacht Club Boys. 20th Century-Fox.

- fj WESTERN COURAGE — Ken Maynard. Screen story by Charles F. Royal. Directed by Spender Gordon Bennett. Good riding and plenty of action in this picture about a dude ranch and the foreman who tames a girl. Columbia.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f CAPITOL IDEA, A (Easy Aces Series)—Interesting scenic of Washington, D. C. RKO-Radio.
fj GOING PLACES NOS. 14-15—Lowell Thomas describing strange and beautiful places. Universal.
f HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS! (Adventures of a Newsreel Cameraman Series)—Riveters, tunnel workers, etc. 20th Century-Fox.
f HOLD THAT LINE—Professional and college football. Educational.
fj HONOLULU, PARADISE OF THE PACIFIC (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks).—In color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f LAND OF THE EAGLE (World on Parade Series)—Excellent scenes of Guatemala. Suggested for schools and libraries. RKO-Radio.
f MARCH OF TIME NO. 8—Covering: detective agencies who hire out strike-breakers; Ding Darling's efforts to preserve game; possible G. O. P. presidential candidates. Suggested for schools and libraries. RKO-Radio.
f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 4—Making jewelry; Charleston, S. C.; Latin-American music. Suggested for schools and libraries. Paramount.
f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 5—Showing the love between animals—good for Be Kind to Animals Week; beautiful shots of New York City. Paramount.
f POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 2—Science advancement in many fields. Suggested for schools and libraries. Paramount.
f SPAIN'S ROMANTIC ISLES (Majorca) (World on Parade Series)—Interesting and instructive. RKO-Radio.
fj SPORT ON THE RANGE (Spotlight Series)—Cowboys rounding up wild horses, elk and buffalo. Suggested for schools and libraries. Paramount.
fj STRANGER THAN FICTION NOS. 14-15—Unusual sights such as birds trained to catch fish, water to run cars, fig tree growing in a cellar, etc. Universal.
f SUNDAY SPORTS IN MEXICO—Educational.
f WATER SPORTS—Aquaplaning. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
f WEST INDIES CRUISE (Magic Carpet Series)—Beautiful and interesting shots of Nassau, Cristophe's palace, etc. 20th Century-Fox.
fj WINTER IN AUSTRIA—Beautiful snow covered mountains form the background for thrilling skiing. Suggested for school, library and church use. Austrian National Tourist Office.

CARTOONS

- fj ADVENTURES OF POPEYE—As usual he overcomes all foes. Paramount.
fj CASE OF THE LOST SHEEP, THE—Bo-Peep and other Mother Goose characters. Universal.
fj FOILED AGAIN (Terrytoon)—Funny burlesque of old-time melodrama. Educational.
fj HENRY THE FUNNIEST LIVING AMERICAN—Betty Boop keeps a pet shop. Paramount.
fj HONEYLAND—Delightful fantasy in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
f IT'S EASY TO REMEMBER (Bouncing Ball)—Richard Himber's orchestra. Paramount.
fj MERRY OLD SOUL, THE (Merrie Melody)—King Cole's troubles when he marries the Old Woman in the Shoe—in color. Vitaphone.
f MUSICAL MEMORIES—In color with old-time songs. Paramount.
fj SPINACH OVERTURE—Popeye's feats. Paramount.
fj THREE ORPHAN KITTENS (Silly Symphony)—And how they finally found a home—in color. United Artists.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

- fj ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL THE, NOS. 1-2—Adapted from the short stories by Gilbert Patten. Donald Briggs. Serial about a college hero who gets in and out of trouble constantly. Athletics and games make the picture above the average serial. Universal.
j ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY, THE, NOS. 10-12. Rex, King of Wild Horses, Rin-Tin-Tin, Jr. The horse is returned and all ends well. Mascot.
f CLUB HOUSE PARTY—Song and dance skit starring Ray Perkins. Universal.
f COUNTRYSIDE MELODIES—Lovely musical moods in color. Paramount.
f DESERT DEATH (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—An insurance investigator arrives at a surprising solution. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
j GREAT AIR MYSTERY NOS. 9-12—Tailspin Tommy's adventures continue. Universal.
f HOT MONEY—Thelma Todd and Patsy Kelly get involved in a murder. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
f LUCKY STARS—Showing how screen tests are made. Paramount.
f MANHATTAN MONKEY BUSINESS — Charlie Chase falls in love at the wrong time. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
f MOONLIGHT AND MELODY—Some good dancing. Educational.
f PARADE OF THE MAESTROS—Three orchestra leaders. Paramount.
f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 3—Intimate views of the stars. Columbia.
f STARLIT DAYS AT LIDO—Various famous stars watching singing and dancing—in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its Better Films National Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of these local groups which are usually called Better Films Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and support of the motion picture socially.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of support for the better pictures through the community organization plan and not through censorship;

To encourage the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures showing currently at the local theatres;

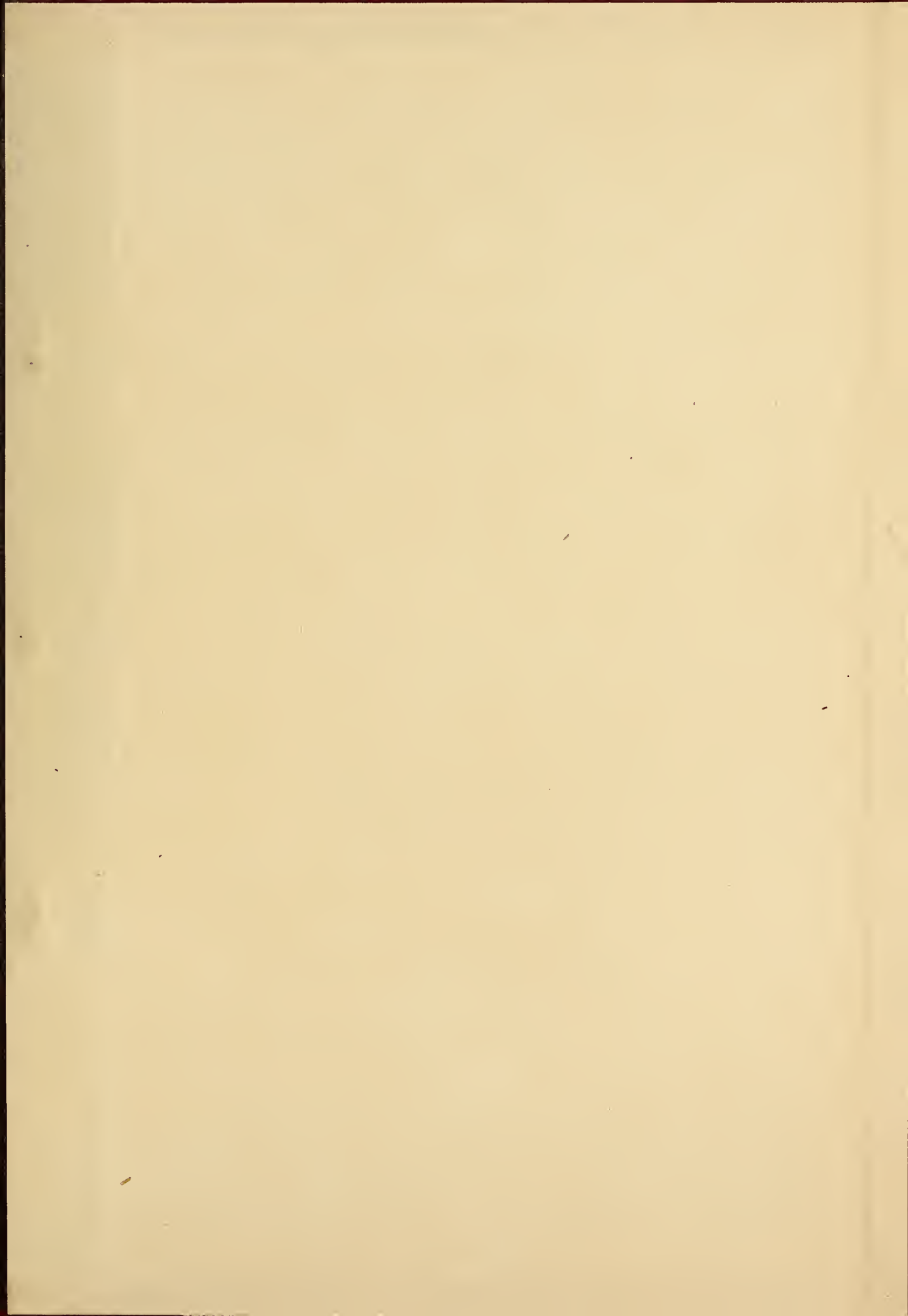
To sponsor juniors' matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for children, and family Friday night or week-end programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To endorse and further the use of visual education in the schools.

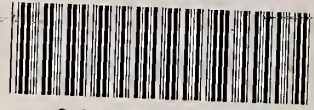
The Better Films National Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its various publications. The publications are:

- National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
 - \$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
 - \$1.00 a year to Council or club groups
- Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
 - \$2.50 a year when taken alone, but available at a special rate of \$1.00 when taken in conjunction with the Magazine
- Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) 25c
- Work of the National Board of Review (booklet) free
- Special film lists each 10c
 - Junior Matinee Films
 - Foreign Films
 - Educational Films
 - Selected Book-Films
 - Films on Subjects of Timely Interest
 - Exceptional Photoplays
 - Musical Films

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